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Inside

Missouri Title Changes Hands In St. Louis:
**HARLEY RACE TEACHES DAVID VON ERICH
A LESSON IN TRICKERY**

May 1984

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Wrestling

IRON SHEIK:

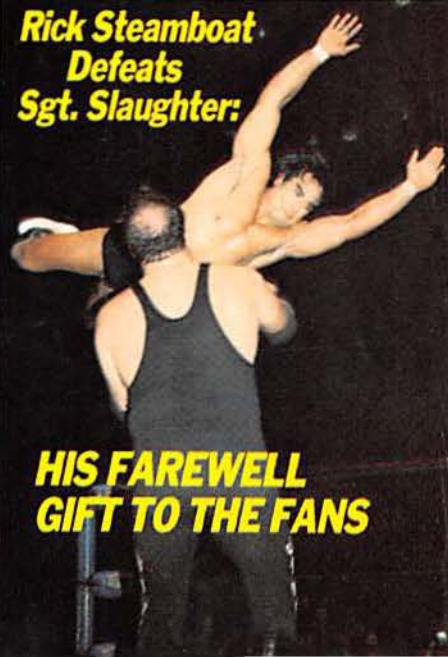
**"I DROVE BOB BACKLUND
OUT OF WRESTLING"**



**Mike Rotondo's Solid Gold Future:
READY TO RULE THE NWA**

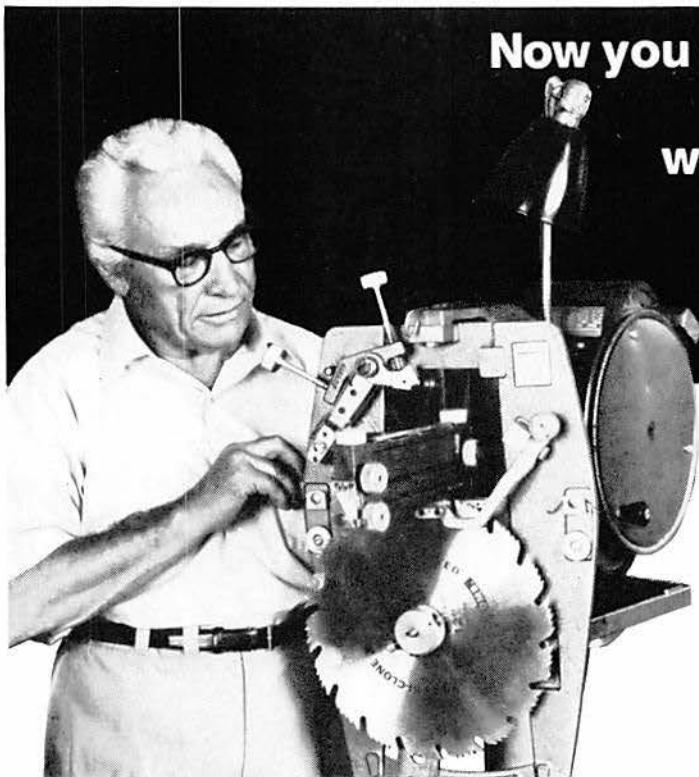


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INSIDE

Wrestling

CONTENTS/MAY 1984

- 6 **SINCERELY YOURS**
Shove It, Buzz!; The Flair Tradition; Stunned By WWF
- 8 **EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK by Peter King**
The Hulk Hogan era has begun
- 10 **BEHIND THE DRESSING ROOM DOOR by Stu Saks**
Dusty Rhodes' most painful moment
- 12 **ON THE ROAD with Craig Peters**
Talking about the junior heavyweight division with Mike Jackson
- 14 **NAMES MAKIN' NEWS by Bill Apter**
All the latest news as of press time
- 18 **BODYSLAM AND PINFALLS by Dan Shocket**
The end of a shameful title reign
- 20 **THE INSIDER by Joseph Bua**
A look at "The Tag Team Mecca Of The World"
- 22 **RICK STEAMBOAT DEFEATS SGT. SLAUGHTER:
HIS FAREWELL GIFT TO THE FANS**
An exciting win prior to a sad retirement
- 26 **NEWS FROM THE WRESTLING CAPITALS**
Eyewitness coverage of the month's major matches
- 28 **WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**
Updates on four major mat stars
- 29 **CAPSULE PROFILE #94**
A mini-biography plus pinup of Carlos Colon
- 32 **OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS**
The sport's most respected rankings
- 34 **MIKE ROTONDO'S SOLID GOLD FUTURE:
READY TO RULE THE NWA**
Before long he could be world champion!
- 36 **MISSOURI TITLE CHANGES HANDS IN ST. LOUIS:**
HARLEY RACE TEACHES DAVID VON ERICH A LESSON IN TRICKERY
A valuable lesson at the price of a valuable title
- 38 **IRON SHEIK: "I DROVE BOB BACKLUND OUT OF WRESTLING"**
The former WWF champion is interviewed on "The Hotseat"
- 42 **DID MAGNUM T.A. COST MR. WRESTLING II THE AWA TITLE?**
Trouble brews between a wrestler and his trusted adviser
- 44 **MATT BROCK'S PLAIN SPEAKING**
Hulk Hogan, Carlos Colon, Ric Flair, Dirty Yellow Dog, and more
- 46 **ONE ON ONE**
Ted DiBiase vs. Tommy Rich

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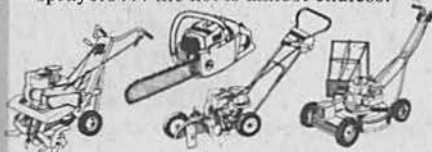
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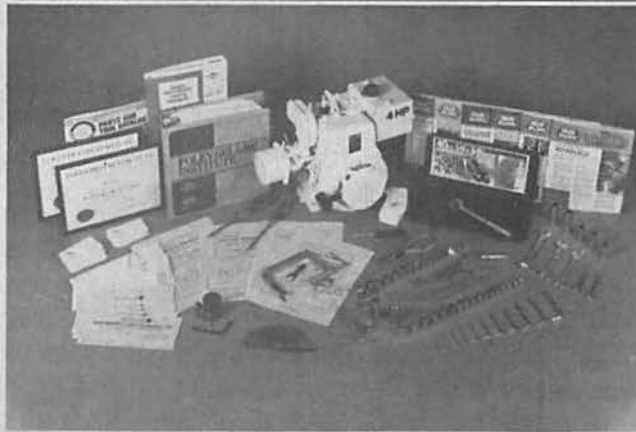
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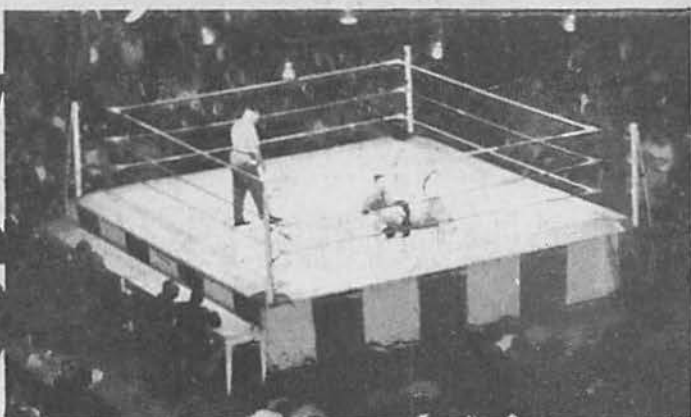
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Buzz Sawyer will lose a lot of blood and a lot of matches now that he no longer has Paul Ellering managing him, writes Mark Tompkins.

SHOVE IT, BUZZ!

I don't believe what is happening in Georgia.

Buzz Sawyer used to be one of my favorite wrestlers. He was strong, vicious, mean, and he had the great Paul Ellering as his manager. Then all of a sudden he claims that Brett Wayne is his brother, he attacks Jake Roberts, Paul Ellering, and The Road Warriors from behind, and makes friends with geeks like Tommy "Wimpcryer" Rich.

Buzz, I don't believe you. You were a great wrestler, but now you stink. I can't believe how much your wrestling skills have decreased since you broke your relationship with Paul Ellering. You wrestle just like a prelim geek. When you said

that wimps like Tommy Rich, Ole Anderson, and Ronnie Garvin would help you win the NWA title, I laughed so hard that I got pains in my side.

You're just a wimp, Buzz. You've gone from a future champion to a future nobody. You're never going to get anywhere, least of all with zeros like Brett and Garvin.

Until you come to your senses, you hunk of manure, you can take your career and shove it.

MARK TOMPKINS
Cresskill, NJ

THE FLAIR TRADITION

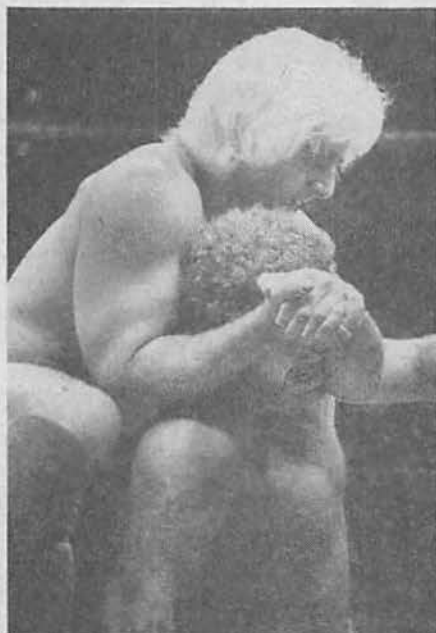
An open letter to Matt Brock:

I've read your "Plain Speaking" column time and time again, and

every time you talk about Ric Flair you end up disgusting me. Your writing about Ric Flair's title victory in the March 1984 issue was especially uncalled for.

Ric Flair is a man of exceeding caliber in the ring. He's the most deserving champion in the sport, yet you choose to ignore all of his potential. To say he's reckless with wrestling's tradition is about as true as saying Ric isn't the NWA World champion.

Ric Flair *is* the champion, whether you like it or not, Mr. Brock. He won the title fair and



Ric Flair, en route to winning the NWA title from Harley Race, is underrated by Matt Brock, according to reader Marie Mincks.

square and that's all that matters. Now the NWA title is back where it belongs—with Ric Flair. Everyone knows what a good champion
(Continued on page 64)

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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter
King
Editor-in-Chief

Referee Jack Lotz slapped the Madison Square Garden mat three times, and a new era in wrestling had begun. Hulk Hogan had captured the WWF championship from The Iron Sheik after just a little more than five minutes of action.

Hogan dominated Sheik from the opening bell. (Actually, Hogan dominated Sheik from *before* the bell, because the Hulk attacked Sheik while the Iranian's back was turned.) And as I watched this match I wondered, *Is there anybody who can defeat Hulk Hogan?* Afterward, I had an even more shocking thought: *Is there anyone who can give Hogan a competitive match?*

Iron Sheik is a very talented wrestler, a master of scientific holds. He is a former Olympic medal winner, and experts consider his knowledge of the sport without equal. Yet he was steamrolled by Hogan in just five minutes. Hogan won not by using any great wrestling holds, but by brute strength. He is a completely different type of WWF champion.

Bob Backlund was soft-spoken and modest. So were Bruno Sammartino and Pedro Morales. But Hogan is still a bit of a braggart. (Of course, as he would rightfully say, he's got every reason to brag.) Still, this is the first time the WWF title has been in the grasp of a man who uses incredible strength, not wrestling science, to win his matches. If you ask me, the only person who can give Hogan a competitive match is someone who is as strong as, or stronger than, Hulk Hogan. Sounds easy, right?

But I don't believe there is anyone in the world as strong as Hulk Hogan.

The Hulk's first defense will be against Paul Orndorff, a man Hulk towers over. Now, I think Orndorff is a super wrestler, but the difference in the two men's height and weight makes this matchup look like a mismatch. Even worse, after Orndorff Hogan is expected to defend his belt against Greg Valentine. Valentine looks even *smaller* than Orndorff! It is entirely possible that Hogan will defend the WWF belt and not even break a sweat as he wins easily night after night.

I know that a good small man can beat a good big man in wrestling. After all, there are other factors besides strength that make a wrestler successful. There's speed and agility and intelligence. But Hogan isn't lacking in any of those categories either. It won't be long before Hogan totally demolishes all of the contenders in the WWF. Perhaps we'll even see the day when promoters must force him to wrestle two or three men at once. Otherwise, it just might not be fair.

Of course, I may be overreacting a little. But the ease with which Hogan destroyed Sheik leads me to believe that he is, at least for now, unstoppable. He stands 6'8" and weighs more than 300 pounds. He will always be the heavy favorite, no matter whom he wrestles. (I can remember on more than one occasion when Bob Backlund was *not* the favorite going into a title defense.)

So let's give Hogan a rousing cheer. In the past, many fans were afraid that the WWF title would fall into the grasp of a rulebreaker who would then dominate the area. With Hulk Hogan as champion, the WWF title is safe.

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by Stu
Saks

DUSTY RHODES HAS experienced a great deal of pain during his long and glorious career. He has broken every limb at least once, he has fractured ribs on eight separate occasions, he has been in traction with a bad back twice, and his forehead looks like a roadmap of the streets of Boston. But he never suffered more pain than he did recently in Florida's Tampa Sportatorium—and he wasn't even touched.

It was to be a memorable day in Dusty Rhodes' life (and it was, though unpleasantly so). The "American Dream" was to be honored by various wrestling promoters on *Championship Wrestling From Florida* for years of service and dedication to the sport. At the televised ceremony, Dusty was to be further honored by the NWA by being given the opportunity to sign for a title match with NWA World heavyweight champion Ric Flair. To add a touch of class to the proceedings, Dusty, a former two-time NWA champ himself, was to sign the contract for the match with a quill pen.

It was a joyous occasion for Dusty that would become even more joyous—and then suddenly turn tragic.

Dusty Rhodes is a real family man. He likes to get home to see his family as often as he can. Unfortunately, his schedule keeps him on the road for much of the year. This year, weather conditions wouldn't allow Dusty to go home even for Christmas. Everyone knew how much this saddened the American Dream.

"We all know that because of bad weather you weren't able to go home for Christmas to see

(Continued on page 50)

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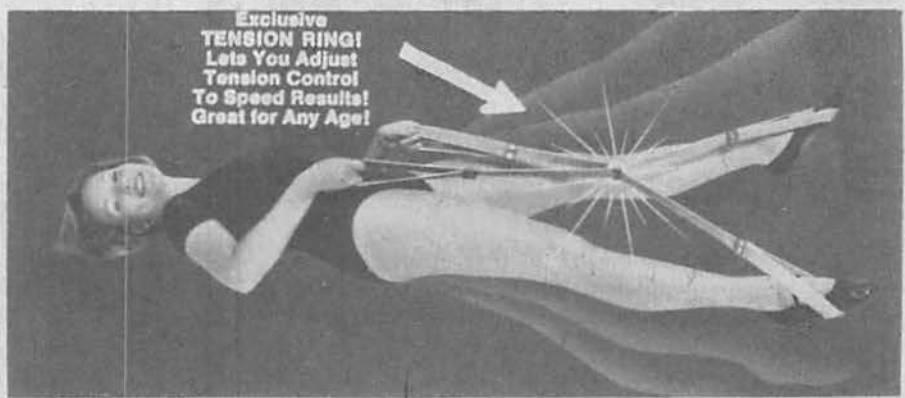
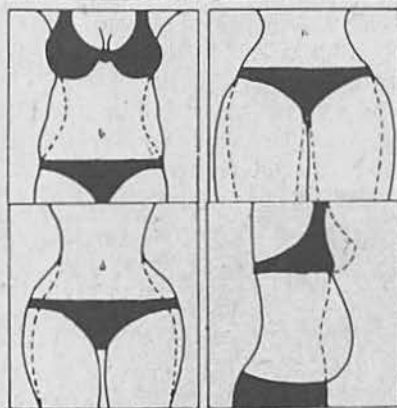
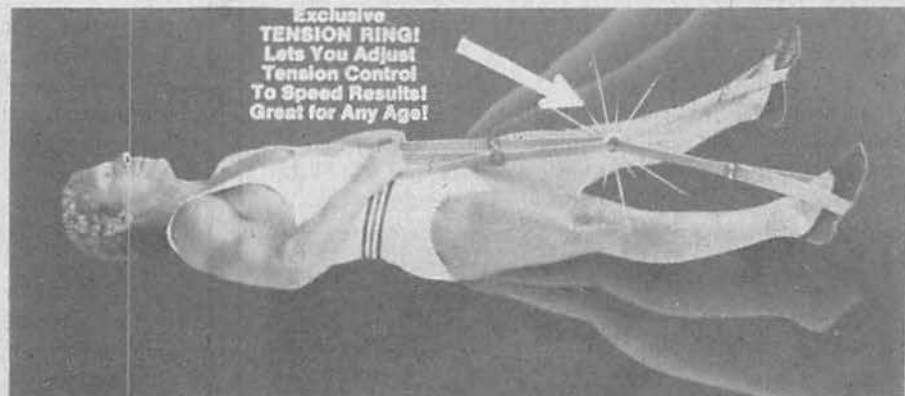
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WHAT DRIVES THESE MEN, that they return to the squared circle every week to face almost certain defeat in the face of seemingly overwhelming odds?

How can they continue to go up against competition like Jake Roberts, King Kong Bundy, the Sawyers, Ted DiBiase, The Road Warriors, and others, on WTBS' *World Championship Wrestling* week after week?

How can they continue to wrestle in the Georgia area when other athletes there enjoy more of the spotlight of fame and notoriety?

Who are they? They're men like Randy Barber, Pat Rose, Bob Brown, Sy Jernigan . . . and Mike Jackson.

Jackson, a school teacher with two Masters degrees—one in health, physical education, and recreation and the other in educational administration—is an established wrestler on *World Championship Wrestling*.



Mike Jackson dropkicks Jake Roberts

I recently visited with Mike at his Birmingham, Alabama, home to discuss his attitude toward professional wrestling. Not surprisingly, I received some interesting answers to the questions posed above.

"Sometimes I wonder myself!" Mike replied candidly when I asked him why he continues to step into the ring against opponents that occasionally outweigh him by nearly 100 pounds.

"Let me explain it this way," the 215-pounder said. "When I want to improve my chess game, I play against someone who is much better than I am. In tennis, the accepted way of really improving one's game is to play against someone with a lot more experience than you. I apply the same principle to wrestling. If I step into the ring against someone like Jake Roberts, I may be giving away some poundage, but I'm really putting myself to the absolute test of my abilities. I'm stretching my skills to the limit, and as a result I'm improving my wrestling style. I'm not necessarily in there to win, I'm in there to do the best I can. If I win, it's simply icing on the cake."

Jackson has been doing "the best he can" for about 12 years as a professional. In that time he's wrestled in over 1,600 matches and is currently ranked seventh in the United States among junior heavyweights.

"The junior heavyweight division has long been overlooked, but I think interest is on the upswing," Jackson said. "It's good. A lot of people know me from seeing me wrestle on cable TV, but hardly anybody knows that I

ON THE ROAD

with
CRAIG PETERS

won a tournament last June to crown an Alabama State junior heavyweight champion. People should know that. Wrestling fans should be aware of the junior heavyweight division.

"We've got some excellent athletes in our division," Mike continued.

"Take Les Thornton, the current NWA junior heavyweight champion. The fact that he's called 'The Man of a Thousand Holds' is not hype. He's really one of the most knowledgeable scientific wrestlers in the sport. Some people feel he bends the rulebook a little bit, but whether you believe that or

not, you've got to admit that technically he's one of the best wrestlers around.

"Then there's Tommy Rogers. This kid's got a build on him that is excellent, and he knows how to channel his strength against his opponent. He wrestled Thornton and came very close to winning the title. I was special referee for that match, and as good as Rogers was, the fact that he took on Thornton and did so well makes him that much better, at least as far as I'm concerned.

"Plus you've got Brad Armstrong," Mike added. "I don't think he needs any introduction to any wrestling fan. The only trouble with Brad, I feel, is that he's starting to get too involved in that feud with Ted DiBiase. If he didn't have that bitterness and hatred within him, he'd be superb. But after seeing what DiBiase did to Brad's father, I suppose that a feud is the least of ways he can vent his anger and hostility."

Jackson seems content with his career, but does he ever get jealous of the fame and glory that men like Tommy Rich and Brett and Buzz Sawyer receive?



Jackson: Alabama junior heavyweight champion

"No, I'm not jealous," Mike said. "I'm not in wrestling for fame and glory, I'm in it for myself. I teach school, so I don't need wrestling as a career. I'm in that ring because I want to be. I figure that as long as I do my very best in every match, and as long as I continue to improve, that's satisfaction enough. As for fame—well, maybe that's on its way. People are beginning to pay more attention to the junior heavyweight division, and that's a very good thing."

Then Mike broke into a wide smile.

"And I'm finally going to have my picture printed in *Inside Wrestling*," he said with a laugh. "Right now, that's about all the fame I can handle!" □



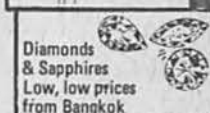
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NAMES MAKING



HULK HOGAN

Hulk Hogan defeated **The Iron Sheik** on January 23 at Madison Square Garden to win the WWF heavyweight championship. It took only 5:40 for Hulk-a-Mania to demolish the Teheran, Iran, native. The match in the Garden, by the way, was supposed to be a rematch between Sheik and former WWF champion **Bob Backlund**. But Backlund had not yet recovered from injuries suffered earlier at the hands of the Sheik (and aggravated during their December title match), so WWF officials declared Hogan the number one contender. Sheik's manager, the **Ayatollah Freddie Blassie**, maintains that WWF officials are engaged in a conspiracy against The Iron Sheik, who held the title for only 28 days. "What else can anyone with any brains believe?" Blassie asked. "The WWF rates Hogan number one after only one week in the area? It's ridiculous! Those pencil-necked geeks on the ratings committee

ought to step into the ring with my man Iron Sheik, then they'll know who the number one man in the area is!" You can read Iron Sheik's opinions on the situation in an exclusive "Hotseat" interview beginning on page 38.

Angelo Mosca Jr. feels his title victory over Ivan Koloff for the Mid-Atlantic championship was crucial for wrestling. The area had come under the complete control of manager Gary Hart when Dick Slater, who was simultaneously holding both the Mid-Atlantic and U.S. titles, handed the Mid-Atlantic belt to his stablemate Koloff. "Quite frankly," Mosca said, "I was surprised that the NWA didn't act against this move. Titles should be won in the ring, not passed from one person to another. This area would have been in bad shape with Hart, Slater, and Koloff running things."

A tough break for **The Fabulous Ones, Steve Keirn** and **Stan Lane**: They were scheduled



KEIRN & LANE

to defend their Mid-Southern tag team belts on television against **Elijah Akeem** and **Kareem Muhammad**, but an ice storm prevented them from making it to the arena in time for the match. Mid-Southern officials stood firm in their contention that if Akeem and Muhammad believed the title match important enough to be there in spite of the weather, Keirn and Lane should have felt that way. They ruled the match a forfeit and awarded the belts to Akeem and Muhammad.



THE SUPER DESTROYERS

Super Destroyers I & II have regained the World Class American tag team belts from **Brian Adidas** and **Iceman King Parsons**. . . **Kendo Nagasaki** has defeated **Mike Rotondo** for the Florida heavyweight title. . . **Larry Zbyszko** is negotiating to wrestle a series of matches in the AWA area soon.

St. Louis could be the site of one of the greatest matches of 1984—depending on whether or not **Ric Flair** can defeat the winner of a scheduled Battle Royal. Flair and the winner of that match

N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...

are scheduled to wrestle on the next card in the Kiel Auditorium, but the big news is that AWA World champion **Nick Bockwinkel** might wrestle the winner of that match! Bockwinkel's manager, **Bobby Heenan**, made the challenge on televised St. Louis wrestling (which can be seen every Saturday night on channel 30): "St. Louis has been the site of some of the greatest matches of all time," he said, "and I want the fans here to see my great champion Nick Bockwinkel in action. Nick will defeat the NWA World champion, whether it's Flair or whoever wins the Battle Royal and defeats Flair. But whomever the opponent, I'm looking for the AWA and NWA World titles to be unified, and I predict Bockwinkel will be the man to emerge as the one and only true World champion!"

Crazy Luke Graham is now wrestling in St. Louis and throughout Iowa. He recently teamed with



CRAZY LUKE GRAHAM

Tully Blanchard and the two men grappled to a double-disqualification verdict against **Avalanche Tyler** and **Bulldog Bob Brown** in Des Moines, Iowa... **Shohei "Giant" Baba** and **"Jumbo" Tsuruta** successfully defended their International tag team belts against Freebirds **Michael Hayes** and **Terry Gordy** in Tokyo—if you



TSURUTA & BABA

call a double-disqualification "successful"... Wrestling has returned to Barbados after an absence of many years. The World Wrestling Council recently pitted WWC Universal champion **Carlos Colon** against NWA World champion **Ric Flair**, a match in which Flair was disqualified for trying to pin Colon while Flair's foot was on the ropes.

Mid-South officials should find a way of banning **Jim Cornette** from appearing on their televised broadcasts. During a recent telecast, **Mr. Wrestling II** and **Magnum T.A.** were in the ring waiting to defend their tag team belts when Cornette ran to the microphone and started yelling about his men not

getting any title shots. Suddenly, Cornette's men, **Loverboy Dennis** and **Beautiful Bobby**, also known as **The Midnight Express**, charged the ring, hit Wrestling II over the head with a club, and proceeded to tar-and-feather Magnum T.A. (using molasses rather than tar). It took the combined efforts of **Junkyard Dog**, **Hacksaw Duggan**, **Steve Williams**, and others to clear the ring and restore order to the television studio.

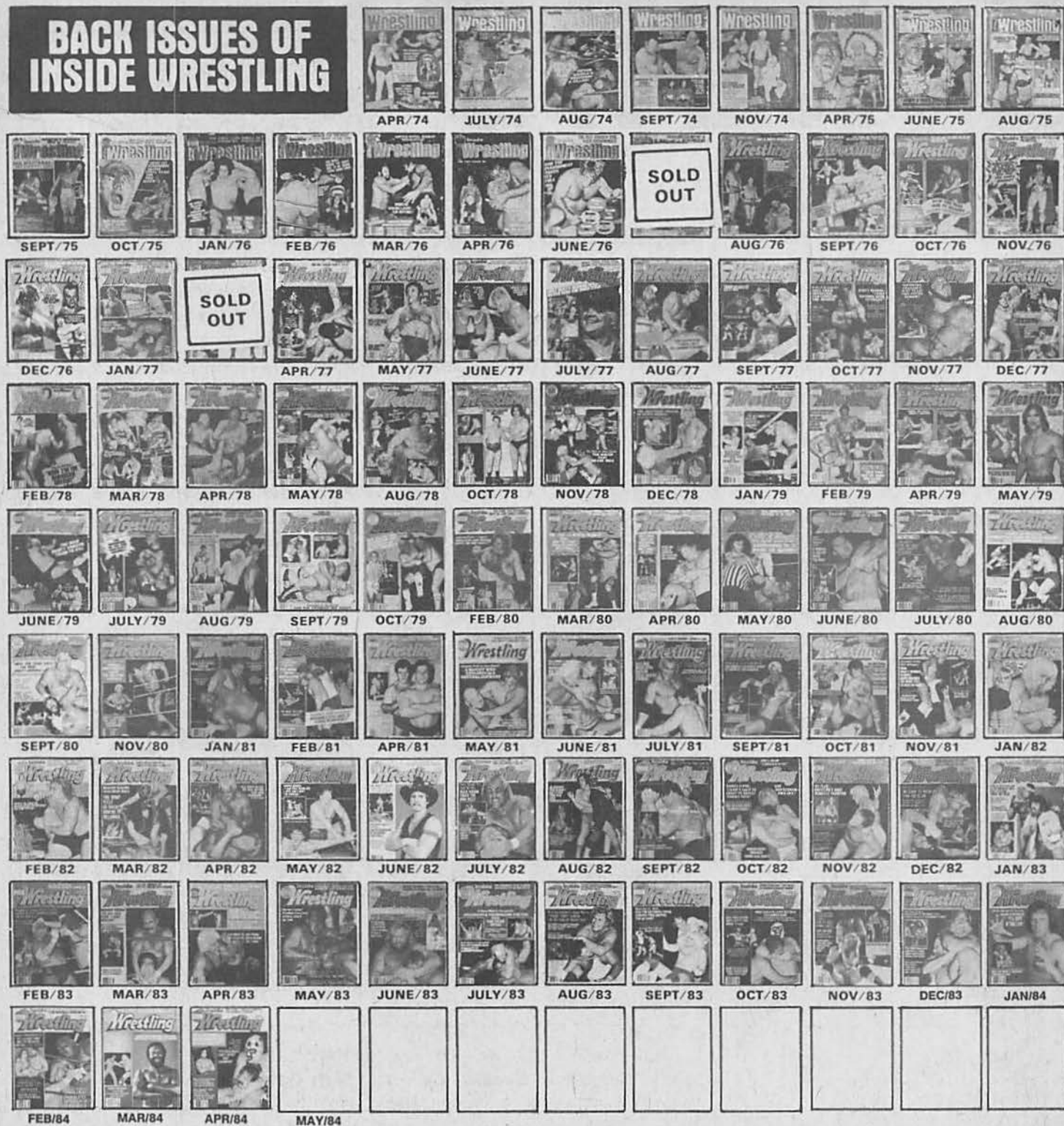


JIM CORNETTE

The team of **Mike Davis** and **Mike Rotondo** defeated **One Man Gang** and **Ron Bass** for the U.S. heavyweight tag team belts... **The Spoiler** has returned to the Georgia area under the management of **Precious Paul Ellering**... **Matt Borne** is now a fan favorite in the Pacific Northwest area, currently helping **Curt Hennig**, **Scott McGhee**, and others in the effort to run Pacific Northwest heavyweight champion **Rip Oliver** from the area.

That's all for now, wrestling fans. See you at the matches! □

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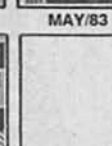
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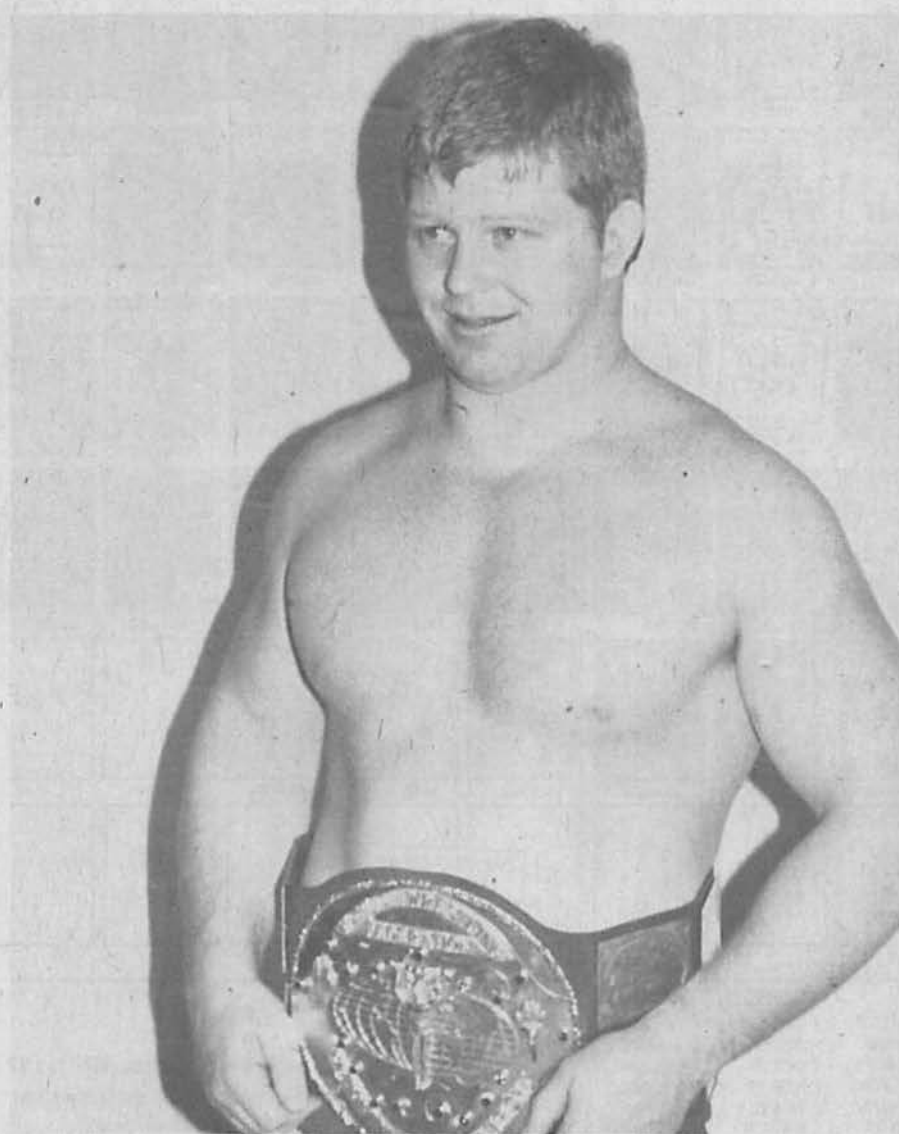
Body Slams & Pinfalls

By Dan
Shocket

I'M SURE IT comes as no surprise to everyone that I considered Bob Backlund's WWF championship reign a disgrace. Not since the dark days of Bruno Sammartino has wrestling suffered so grievously. His defeat at the hands of The Iron Sheik should go down in wrestling history as one of the great events.

What distresses me is that people are misinterpreting his ignominious defeat. They are saying that a champion shouldn't surrender, nor should his manager be given the right to throw in the towel. It's strange that the greatest criticism leveled at Backlund was when he was at his most professional. This causes people to ignore the blight that was his championship.

For once in his life, Arnold Skaland, Backlund's manager, acted intelligently. When he threw in the towel, Backlund was beaten. Whether or not his back was previously injured, as he claims (and only his mother believes), the once and former champion could have received permanent injury. There's no sense in risking that for any title. What good could it have done for Backlund to lose both his title and career? For people to disagree with that decision only shows the difference between the professional athlete and his admirers. Fans want heroes; wrestlers want long and prosperous careers. There's no sense in making an empty gesture at the expense of your livelihood.



No longer will the WWF championship belt be wrapped around Bob Backlund's waist, and wrestling is that much better for that fact.

The controversy surrounding Backlund's loss keeps us from examining his career. The debate over whether or not he should have surrendered distracts us from this. And

that is a crime. Now that the nightmare is over, we must make sure it doesn't occur again.

It is hard to be dispassionate
(Continued on page 54)

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THE

By Joseph Bua

INSIDER

THE MID-SOUTHERN region is being called "Tag Team Mecca" by experts in this facet of the sport. They say there are more good tag teams in that part of the country than anywhere else in the world. And they are right.

The Fabulous Ones, Rock 'n' Roll Express, Bruise Brothers, and A-Team are some of the teams currently campaigning in this AWA-governed region. The immediate goal shared by each of the teams is the AWA Southern title (currently held by Elijah Akeem and Kareem

Muhammad) and the ultimate dream of these teams is to wear the AWA World tag team championship belts (currently in the possession of Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie's team of Ken Patera and Crusher Blackwell).

No one knows better of the pool of tag team talent in the Mid-Southern area than Al-Kaissie. It is a well-known fact by wrestling insiders that the manager has used all his power to keep his champions out of the area.

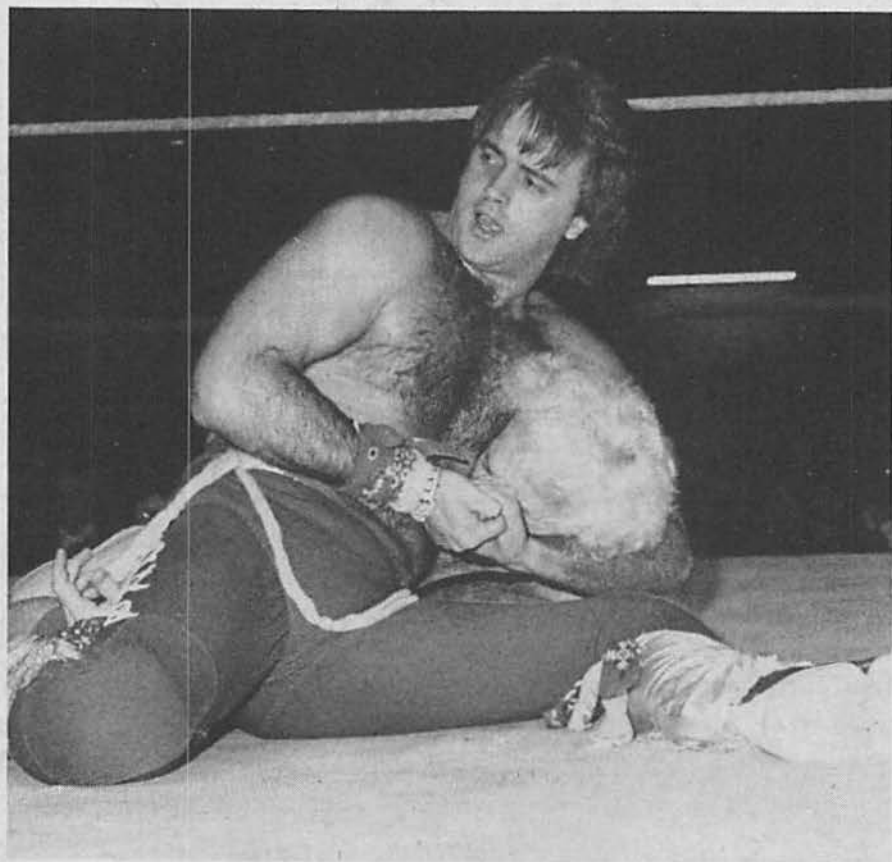
"Kaissie has no choice," AWA

President Stanley Blackburn said while watching Patera and Blackwell defend their titles in Memphis recently against Rick Morton and Robert Gibson, The Rock 'n' Roll Express. "The AWA mandates who the champions must wrestle, and whether Al-Kaissie likes it or not, the Mid-Southern area is part of the AWA. The best tag teams in the sport are here in this area. Patera and Blackwell are the champions. They have to give the best teams the opportunity. That's mandatory. It's part of the rules."

The Express defeated the AWA champs by disqualification that evening. On the same card, The Fabulous Ones, Steve Keirn and Stan Lane, battled The Moondogs in a Loser Leave Town Steel Cage Match. Keirn and Lane passed up an opportunity to wrestle for the AWA tag team title to take this match, and it was well worth it. The Fab Ones defeated The Moondogs, forcing the former WWF champs to leave the area.

Of all the fine combinations in the area, the two creating the most interest are two that don't hold any titles: The Fabulous Ones and The Rock 'n' Roll Express. These two teams have much in common. Both rely on quickness, scientific wrestling skills, and fine teamwork to win their matches. Each team enjoys the support of the Mid-Southern fans. Each team identifies with rock music and derives energy from the highly charged music to which

(Continued on page 52)



During an AWA tag team title match in Memphis, Robert Gibson of The Rock 'n' Roll Express applies a headlock against Ken Patera.

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SUPERSET-II

Sgt. Slaughter ... Killer Brooks ... Ernie Ladd ... Tony Atlas ... Mr. Wrestling II ... Rocky Johnson ... Junkyard Dog ... Tiger Mask ... Kerry Von Erich ... El Santo Negro ... Big John Studd ... Jesse Ventura ... King Lawler ... Barry Windham ... Larry Zbyszko ... Capt. Redneck ... Kevin Sullivan ... The Purple Haze ... Tony Garea ... Greg Gagne ... Turk ... Frank Dusek ... Adrian Street ... Jim Brunzell ... Dr. Red Fang ... Buzz Sawyer ... Iron Mike Sharpe ... Bob Armstrong ... Ivan Koloff ... Greg Valentine ... Don Kernodle ... King Kong Mosca ... Tully Blanchard ... Adrian Adonis ... and Kamala the Ugandan Giant!!!

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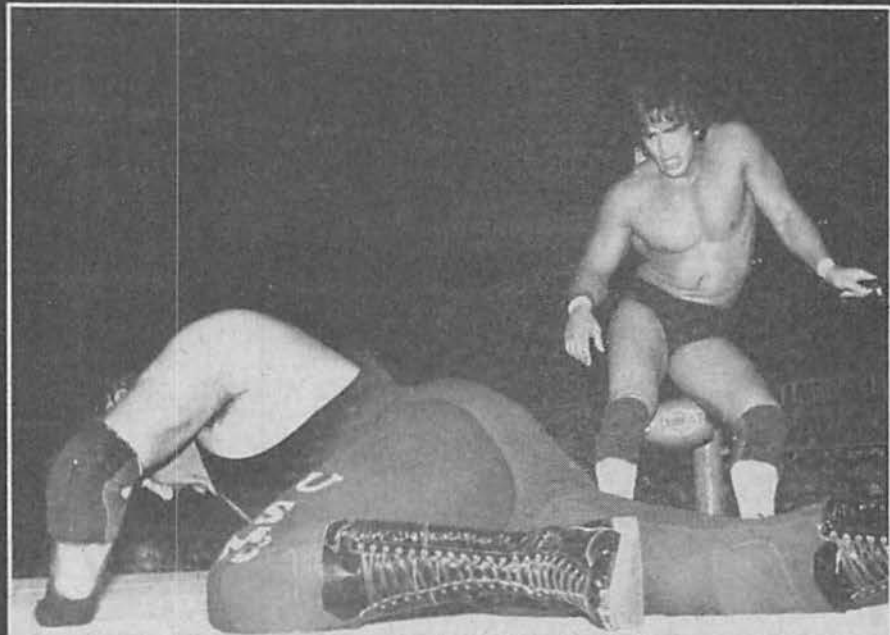
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Rick Steamboat Defeats Sgt. Slaughter:

HIS FAREWELL GIFT TO THE FANS

As he retires from wrestling, Rick Steamboat is going on a farewell tour of the arenas he loves best. It is a quietly sad man who goes from town to town, saying goodbye to the fans he loves and who love him. The matches he wrestles are explosively special for many, many reasons

Rick Steamboat couldn't think of a better way to pay back his fans' years of loyal support than to soundly defeat a man whom they despise. With little reason to preserve any strength, Rick went all out against the hated ex-Marine in his final Charlotte, North Carolina, appearance.



THE SURROUNDINGS WERE unchanged from the last time he was there, but everything seemed different this time to Rick Steamboat. It was the last time he'd ever wrestle in North Carolina's Charlotte Coliseum. So he lingered in the dressing room, allowing himself to stay longer than necessary. In years to come, there'll be so much he'll want to remember.

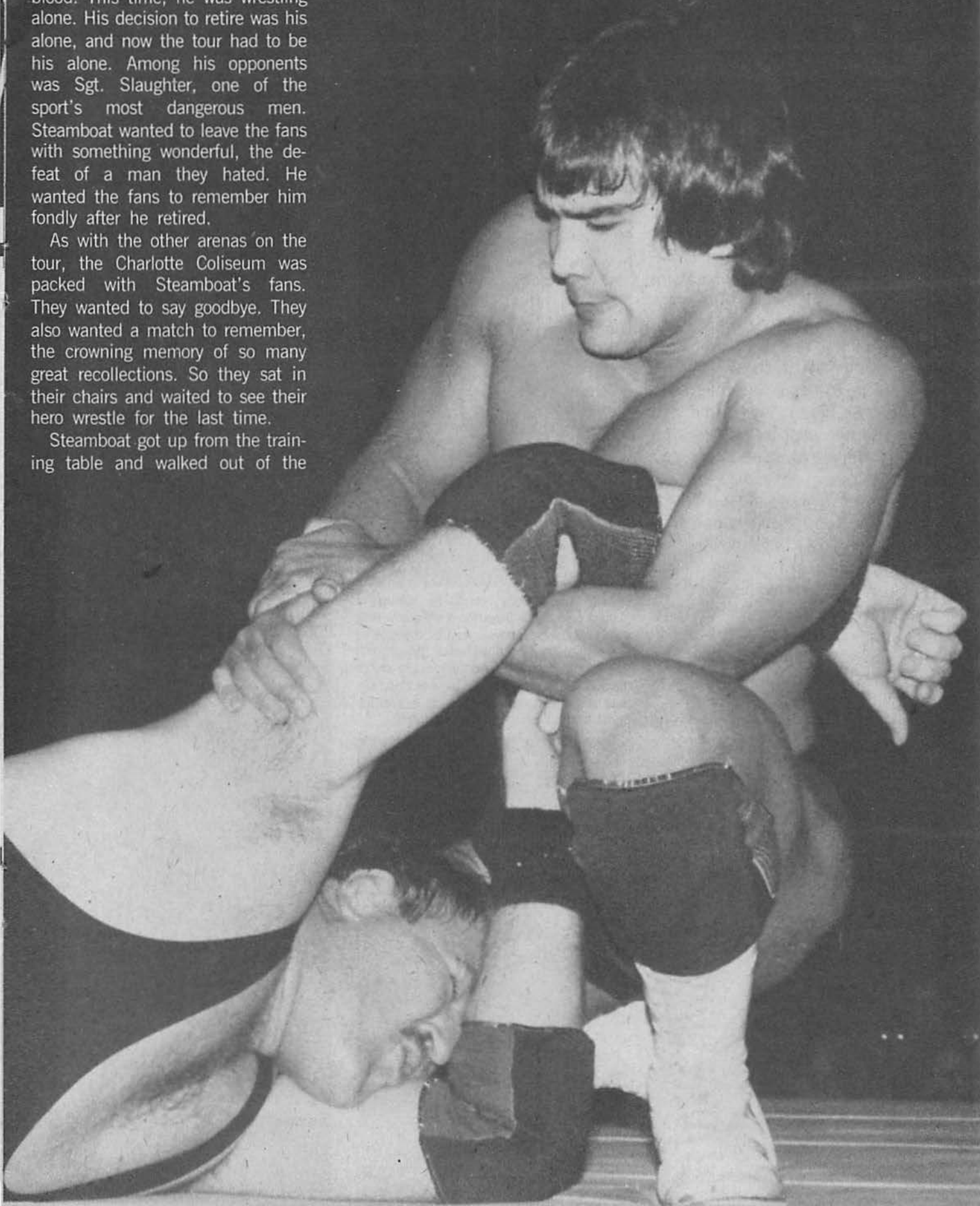
As he lay back on the training table, Steamboat thought about why he was making his last appearance in Charlotte. He announced his retirement from wrestling to devote his full energy to running his gymnasium in that same city. He hadn't wanted it that way; it was how things worked out. So now he was traveling through the Mid-Atlantic area for the last time, wrestling in the arenas that had been the focal point for most of his adult life. When the tour ended, Steamboat would be a former wrestler. The thought scared him.

It was a strange and rugged farewell tour. Steamboat's reputation rested on his tag team heroics,

most often paired with Jay Youngblood. This time, he was wrestling alone. His decision to retire was his alone, and now the tour had to be his alone. Among his opponents was Sgt. Slaughter, one of the sport's most dangerous men. Steamboat wanted to leave the fans with something wonderful, the defeat of a man they hated. He wanted the fans to remember him fondly after he retired.

As with the other arenas on the tour, the Charlotte Coliseum was packed with Steamboat's fans. They wanted to say goodbye. They also wanted a match to remember, the crowning memory of so many great recollections. So they sat in their chairs and waited to see their hero wrestle for the last time.

Steamboat got up from the training table and walked out of the



dressing room. He turned to a companion and admitted, "This moment, just before the match, is when I'm most alive. There's a jumble of excitement, determination, and fear that's unequalled at any other time. Of everything I'm going to miss about wrestling, this moment I'll miss the most."

Then he strode through the arena and into the ring. Slaughter stood angrily in the opposite corner. He wanted to humiliate Steamboat, make this farewell appearance one that would give Rick nightmares for the rest of his life. Slaughter watched Steamboat receive the applause of the fans and his hatred grew even more intense.

The bell rang. Slaughter and Steamboat began a war that had fans rising to their feet with excitement. After what seemed an eternity, the two grapplers had battered each other almost into senselessness. The two men lay gasping on the mat. Driven by some determination only a hero can understand, Rick got to his feet. He somehow executed a perfect flying bodypress and the match was his. The fans gave him a standing ovation. It was a splendid exhibition of wrestling heroics.

In other days, Steamboat would

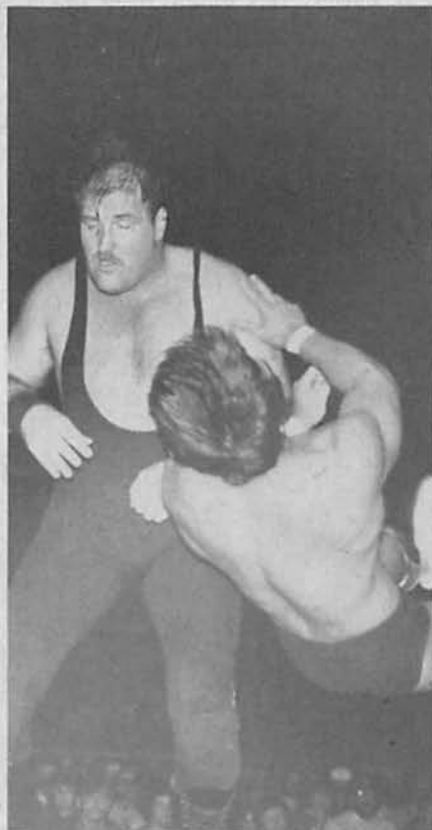
have celebrated this victory. Instead, it was a subdued and solemn man who dressed and quietly left the arena. Even this spectacular

conquest couldn't eliminate the sorrow of never wrestling in that arena again.

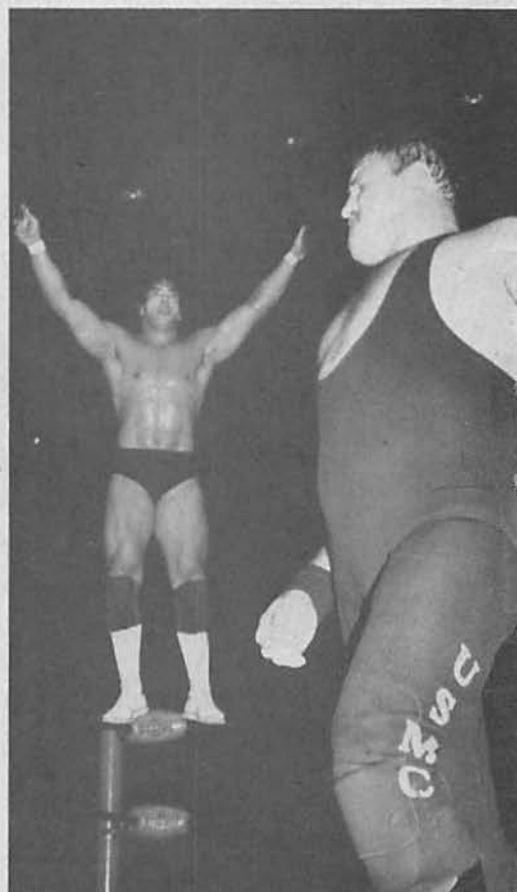
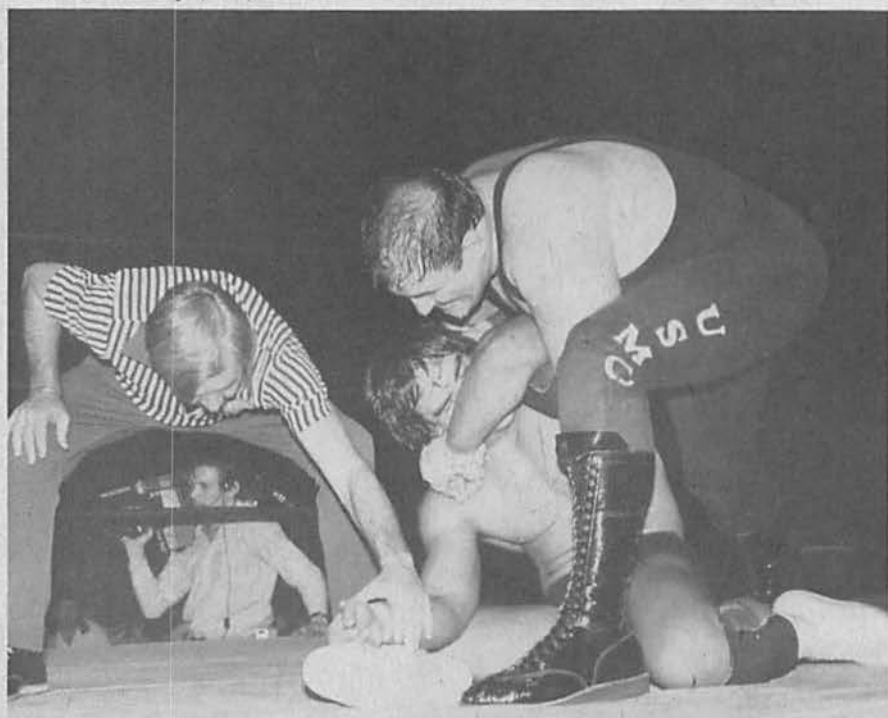
Later that night, too tense to sleep, he allowed a reporter into his motel room for an interview. The reporter saw Steamboat move slowly, the battering he'd received just beginning to stiffen him up. He was used to this happening. It was something that wouldn't happen again.

"When I bought into the gym," Steamboat explained, "I didn't think it would mean the end of my wrestling career. I've thought a lot about whether I would have bought it if I'd known the outcome. Today, I have to devote my full time to the gym. There's just no other way to do it right. I thought about selling out and remaining a wrestler. It can't be done."

"This is the best deal I'll ever get. If I'm going to protect my future, I've got to stay with it. This is the most difficult decision I've ever made. It's also the most mature decision I've ever made. A wrestler can't afford to think about the fu-



Despite his groggy condition, Slaughter manages to catch Steamboat off-guard with a shoulderblock (above). Just as the referee was about to stop the match, Steamboat was able to escape Slaughter's cobra clutch (below). Rick mounts the turnbuckles, signals to the fans, and prepares to deliver the match-ending flying bodypress (right).





Steamboat sadly says goodbye to his fans as he leaves the ring.

ture. I guess this proves I'm really not a wrestler anymore.

The hardest thing for Steamboat was telling Jay Youngblood that the tag team was finished. He and Jay had captured the NWA tag team title for the fifth time in their careers, from the Briscos, on Thanksgiving. (The title has since been claimed following an elimination tournament by Cowboy Bob Orton and Don Kernodle.) "We were glorious," Rick said. "I don't mean to sound immodest, but I'll always be proud of our success as a tag team. We just kept getting better because we kept working at it. When I had to tell Jay I was retiring, that he was on his own, I felt like hell for days. It took that long for me to get up the nerve. He was the first one to know. After that ordeal, the rest came relatively easy.

"And now the farewell tour is ending. What has been my whole life will be gone. I don't know what it is to wake up in the morning and not think about my next opponent. I guess I'll find out."

Then Steamboat fell silent. He seemed to be staring into himself, looking for an answer he'd yet to find. Perhaps he'd hoped during the interview the words would come, the words to take away the pain he felt. He was silent for a long time, then sadly shook his head. The interview and career of Rick Steamboat, wrestler, was coming to an end. □

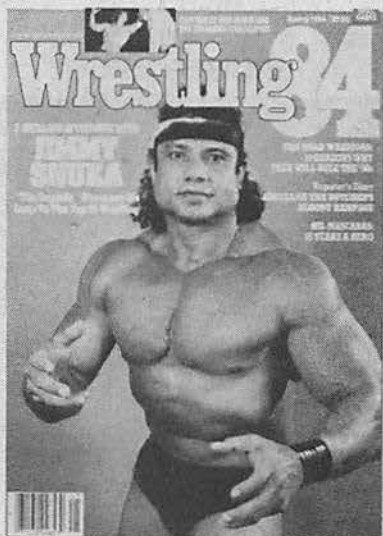
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WICHITA, KS

By Larry Easley



**RIC FLAIR
vs.
BRUISER BRODY**



Brody started strong, whipping the NWA World champion from one turnbuckle to another. Flair rolled out of the ring to avoid a Brody elbowsmash. Brody followed him and was slammed into the steel ringpost. Later, Brody reversed Flair's figure-four leglock and slammed Flair into the turnbuckle. Flair collided with referee Jim McGuire, who rose from the canvas and disqualified the challenger.

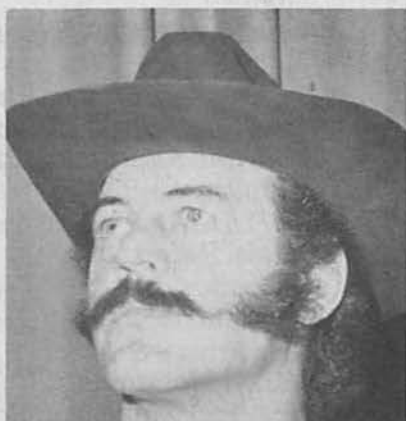
OTHER BOUTS: Buzz Tyler and Tully Blanchard beat M.E.B. and 666 ... Roger Kirby defeated Rick Gibson ... Scott Ferris beat Rob Taylor ... Tiger Mask II defeated Billy Howard.

DENVER, CO

By Jason Martinez



**BOBBY HEENAN
vs.
BLACKJACK LANZA**



Lord James Blears was the special referee in this battle of former friends. After running from Lanza at the outset, Heenan used illegal tactics to gain momentum in the match, pounding Lanza with his own boot. Lanza rallied back, grabbed his boot back, and beat his former manager savagely for the victory.

OTHER BOUTS: Brad Rheingans defeated Steve O ... Billy Robinson defeated Superstar Graham ... Jesse Ventura beat Buck Zumhofe ... Greg Gagne, Jim Brunzell, Rick Martel, and Baron Von Raschke defeated Sheik Adnan Al-Kaissie, Ken Patera, Crusher Blackwell, and Mr. Saito.

COLUMBIA, SC

By Jack L. Murphy



**DICK SLATER
vs.
GREG VALENTINE**



Valentine challenged for the U.S. championship he has lost to his former partner in January. The champ opened a cut on Valentine's head by ramming him into the ringpost. Later, the referee was knocked down and Cowboy Bob Orton rushed the ring, where he and Slater double-teamed Valentine. The referee called for the bell when he regained consciousness and disqualified Slater, who kept his title.

OTHER BOUTS: Wahoo McDaniel defeated Orton ... Ivan Koloff defeated Mark Youngblood ... Bubba Smith and Michael Samuel Houston beat Hans Schroeder and Barry Orton ... Brett Hart defeated Gary Royal.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

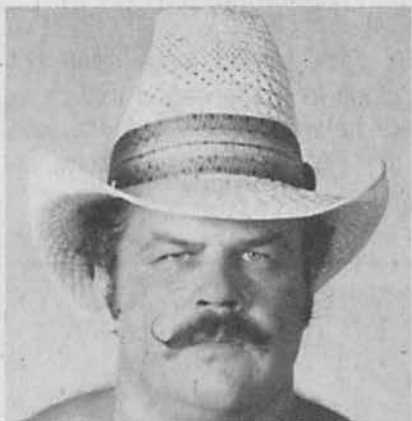


FT. MYERS, FL

By Chris Colbath



BLACKJACK MULLIGAN
vs.
RON BASS



Mulligan challenged Bass, the Southern champion, in a non-sanctioned Steel Cage Match. Bass took immediate control, raking Mulligan's head against the steel mesh. Mulligan, bleeding profusely, attacked Bass wildly and administered the claw. Bass' manager J.J. Dillon attacked the gatekeeper and stole the key to the cage. Dillon and Bass' friend Black Bart attacked Mulligan. Dirty Yellow Dog followed them into the cage, and during the melee, Mulligan managed to pin Dillon. Referee Bill Alfonso awarded Mulligan the victory.

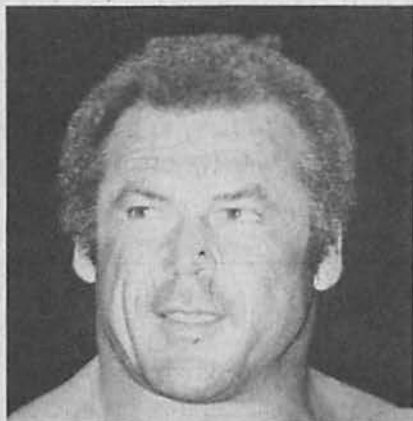
OTHER BOUTS: Mike Rotondo beat One Man Gang ... Dirty Yellow Dog beat J.J. Dillon ... Kendo Nagasaki beat Mike Davis.

EAST QUOGUE, NY

By Anthony Carpenter



MAGNIFICENT MURACO
vs.
IVAN PUTSKI



Muraco punched and kicked his way to an early advantage, but Putski surprised the Intercontinental champion with a bearhug. Muraco gouged Putski's eyes to escape. Putski regained his sight, whipped Muraco into the ropes, and hit him with the Polish hammer on the rebound. Muraco, fearing he was on his way to losing his title, ran back to the dressing room and was counted out.

OTHER BOUTS: Tito Santana and Iron Mike Sharpe were both counted out of the ring ... Rocky Johnson defeated Samoan Sika ... Pat Patterson defeated Iron Mike Sharpe.

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

By Jimmy Shely



ANDRE THE GIANT
vs.
KAMALA



Andre dazed Kamala with a headbutt, but the Ugandan giant fought back with a vicious chop to the top of the head. Kamala continued his attack with kicks and chops to Andre's head and abdominal region. The French giant rallied back with a series of headbutts. Gen. Skandor Akbar entered the ring to help Kamala, and Andre was declared the winner by disqualification.

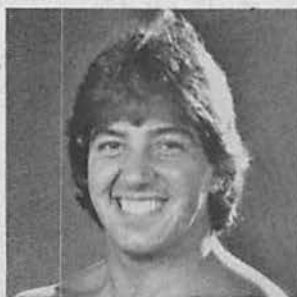
OTHER BOUTS: Kerry Von Erich and Iceman Parsons defeated The Super Destroyers ... Jose Lothario defeated Tom Renesto ... Black Gordman defeated Brian Adidas ... Rosie Moreno beat Lola Gonzales.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Do you have a favorite wrestler who has left your area? Are you wondering where he is today? Then this special column is just for you. Each month, we will update the whereabouts of four current or former wrestlers.

KELLY KINISKI

Kelly, the son of former NWA and AWA heavyweight champion Gene Kiniski (the only man in history to hold both titles), is currently on a major tour of Japan. Kelly reports that he has had several offers from promoters in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwestern areas, and is considering a return to the United States in the near future.

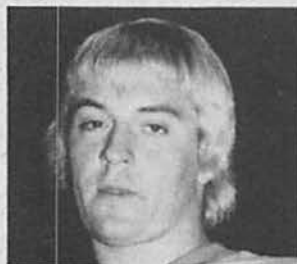
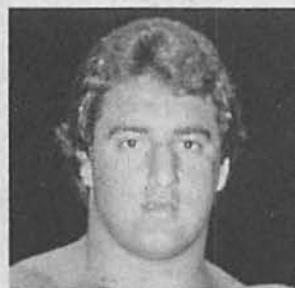


RICK MARTEL

Following his departure from the AWA, Rick signed for a series of matches in Montreal, Quebec. Sources close to Martel report that he is considering returning to the WWF, where he would like to reunite with Tony Garea, with whom he has held the WWF tag team title twice.

SCOTT MCGHEE

The Shipley, England, native is wrestling under his nickname of "Pat" McGhee in the Pacific Northwest area. McGhee tells us that he enjoys the competition there and says that the fans have been showing him great support in all his matches. McGhee's immediate goal is the Pacific Northwest heavyweight title, currently held by Rip Oliver.



ERIC EMBRY

The blond scientific star has changed his ways, now feeling that the rulebreaking method of wrestling is the easiest way to success. He is currently teaming with one of the most hated men in wrestling, Gentleman Ken Timbs. Embry and Timbs are presently locked in combat with The Kiwi Shepherders in a feud that stretches from the Southwest to the Northeast.

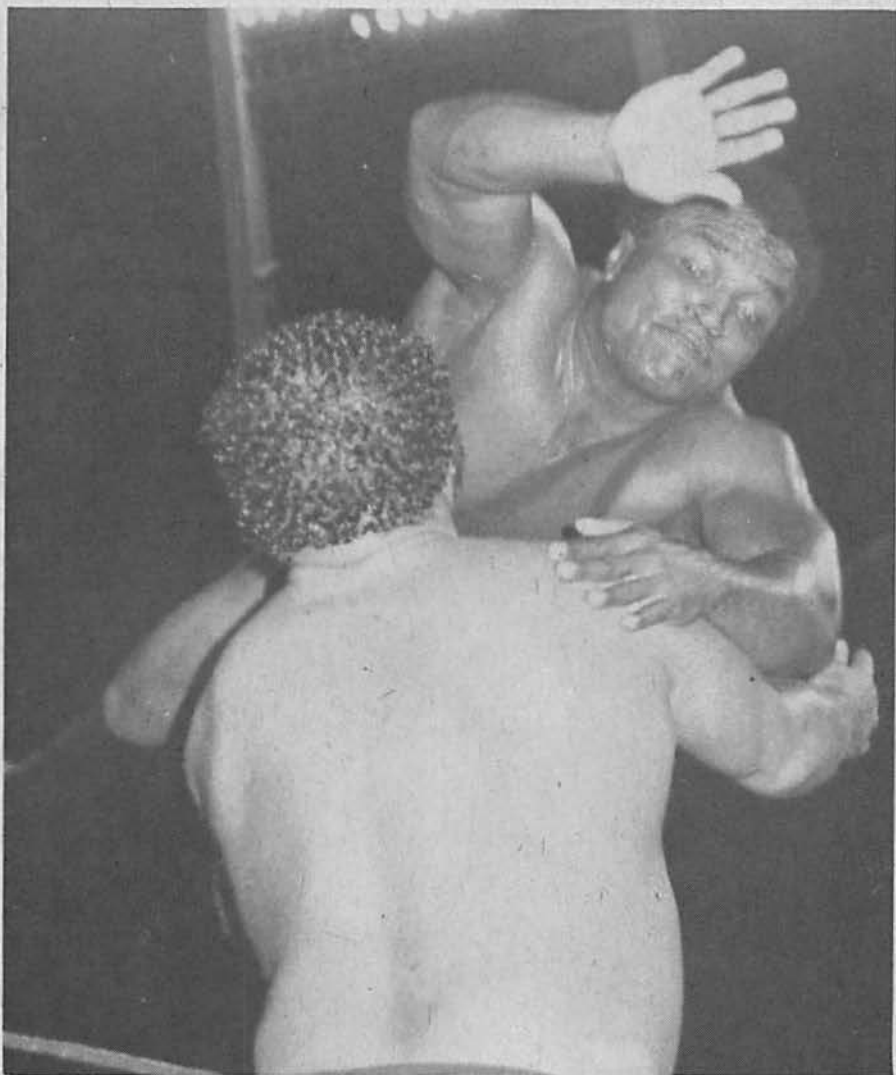
INSIDE WRESTLING

94

capsule profile

A NATIVE OF Puerto Rico, Carlos Colon has earned a reputation for excellence that has spread throughout the entire world ("I receive fan mail from everywhere, and I always appreciate letters, though I'm not always able to answer them all") ... Sports a very athletic, acrobatic style reminiscent of Edouard Carpentier ("I try to work out in the gym at least four times a week") ... Credits his agility in the ring to his early training in track and field ("Track and field gave me a lot of stamina and speed, and both of those qualities are vital in professional wrestling") ... Wrestled for many years in Montreal ("I love the fans in Canada, but after a while I got homesick for Puerto Rico") ... Held the IWA tag team title with Miguel Perez ("Miguel is a terrific wrestler and a very good friend of mine") ... Also held the North American tag team championship with Pedro Morales ("What can I say about Pedro? He's one of the all-time greats, a man who deserves all the cheers and admiration he receives") ... Has held the World Wrestling Council heavyweight championship several times, and currently holds the WWC Univer-

CARLOS COLON

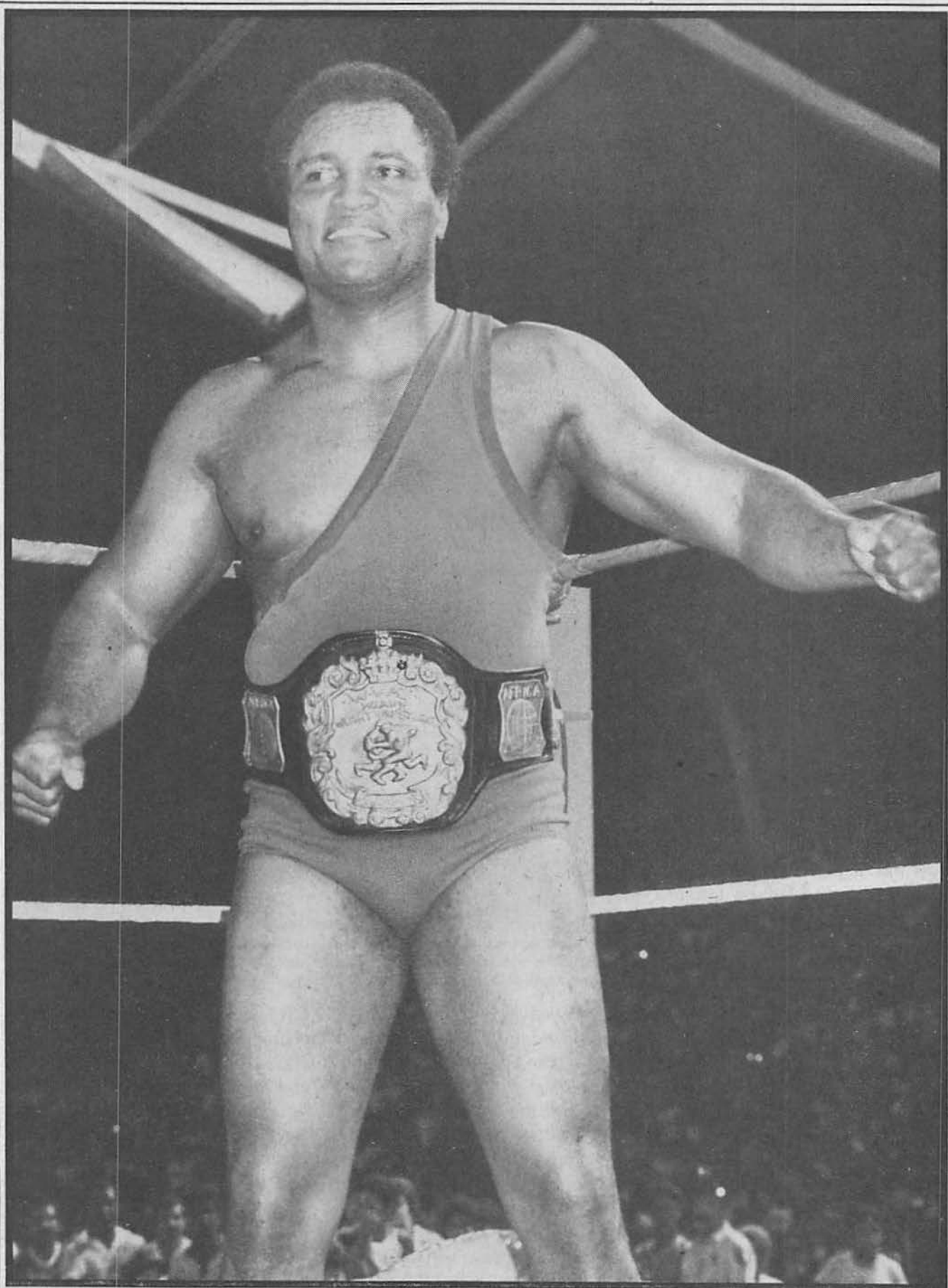


Carlos Colon springs from the turnbuckles, cutting Harley Race down with a cross-bodyblock. The agile WWC Universal champion was the first recipient of the *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* "Special Achievement—Man of the Year" award.

sal heavyweight championship ("I'm proud to be able to represent such a fine wrestling organization as the World Wrestling Council") ... Enjoys the travel opportunities that professional wrestling has given him ("I love to defend my title in different arenas, and I'm looking forward to defending my belt soon in New York City") ... Has been feuding with Abdullah the Butcher for years ("I hate him. It's that simple") ... Has wrestled for the NWA World heavyweight

title many times, against such champions as Harley Race, Ric Flair, Terry Funk, Dory Funk Jr., and Jack Brisco ("I always seem to be a top contender, but I just can't seem to get that extra edge I need to win the title—but someday I will") ... Recently won *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*'s "Special Achievement—Man of the Year" award as voted by the editors of our sister publication ("This was an unexpected honor, and one that I will cherish for a long time"). □

CAPSULE PROFILE PINUP



CARLOS COLON



THIS MONTH IN...

THE Wrestler



GARY HART explains how he guided **COWBOY BOB ORTON** and **DON KERNODLE** to the NWA World tag team title



As **DIRTY YELLOW DOG** enjoys success in Florida, fans there wonder whether they will ever see **BARRY WINDHAM'S** face again

PLUS...

RIC FLAIR'S brawl with **BRUISER BRODY** shows what St. Louis wrestling is all about... **THE ROAD WARRIORS** battle **THE FABULOUS ONES**... A special Q & A interview with **CHRIS ADAMS**... Spotlight on **PAUL ORNDORFF**... **JUNKYARD DOG** vs. **NIKOLAI VOLKOFF**

All this and much more... in the May 1984 issue of *The Wrestler*
ON SALE NOW!

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED



As the carnage throughout wrestling continues, *PWI* asks why the NWA is afraid to stop **TED DiBIASE**



MR. WRESTLING II tells his own explosive story and reveals his fears that **MAGNUM T.A.** is turning bad

PLUS...

A FULL-COLOR centerfold pinup of Mid-Atlantic powerhouse **DICK SLATER**... An exclusive "Press Conference" with the incredible **HULK HOGAN**... **KEN PATERA** and **CRUSHER BLACKWELL** take on **THE ROCK 'N' ROLL EXPRESS**... The lonely world of **ONE MAN GANG**

All this and much more... in the June 1984 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*
ON SALE MARCH 27!

INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters,
And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official

For period ending February 3, 1984

National Wrestling Alliance



**WORLD CHAMPION:
RIC FLAIR**
243, Minneapolis, MN



1—DICK SLATER
235, Tampa, FL

American Wrestling Association



**WORLD CHAMPION:
NICK BOCKWINKEL**
245, Beverly Hills, CA



1—MAD DOG VACHON
225, Algeria

World Wrestling Federation



**CHAMPION:
HULK HOGAN**
320, Venice Beach, CA



1—PAUL ORNDORFF
253, Brandon, FL

Most Popular Wrestlers



1—ANDRE THE GIANT
497, Grenoble, France



2—DUSTY RHODES
302, Austin, TX

Most Hated Wrestlers



1—TED DIBIASE
247, Omaha, NE

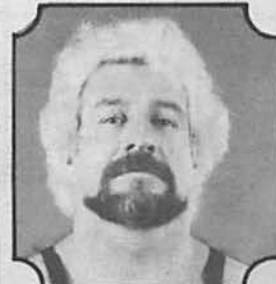


2—NIKOLAI VOLKOFF
345, Siberia, Russia

Tag Teams



**1—COWBOY BOB ORTON
& DON KERNODLE**





2—TED DIBIASE
247, Omaha, NE



3—HARLEY RACE
253, Kansas City, MO



4—KENDO NAGASAKI
248, Singapore

- 5—RON BASS
285, Pampa, TX
- 6—WAHOO McDANIEL
260, Midland, TX
- 7—CARLOS COLON
238, Bayamon, Puerto Rico
- 8—CHRIS ADAMS
225, Stratford on Avon, England
- 9—DAVID VON ERICH
247, Denton, TX
- 10—RIP OLIVER
245, Tampa, FL



2—BLACKJACK LANZA
260, Laredo, TX

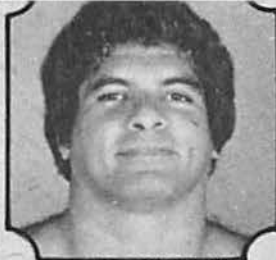


3—JERRY LAWLER
234, Memphis, TN



4—MR. SAITO
247, Japan

- 5—KEN PATERA
256, Portland, OR
- 6—BLACKJACK MULLIGAN
310, Sweetwater, TX
- 7—BRAD RHEINGANS
248, Minneapolis, MN
- 8—BARON VON RASCHKE
271, West Berlin, Germany
- 9—CRUSHER BLACKWELL
474, Stone Mountain, GA
- 10—JESSE VENTURA
270, Muscle Beach, CA



2—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
257, Sunset Beach, HI



3—JIMMY SNUKA
250, Fiji Islands



4—IRON SHEIK
262, Teheran, Iran

- 5—BOB BACKLUND
242, Princeton, MN
- 6—TITO SANTANA
245, Mission, TX
- 7—MASKED SUPERSTAR
282, Atlanta, GA
- 8—SGT. SLAUGHTER
310, Paris Island, SC
- 9—GREG VALENTINE
243, Seattle, WA
- 10—IVAN PUTSKI
242, Krakow, Poland



3—BUZZ SAWYER
240, St. Petersburg, FL



4—JIMMY SNUKA
250, Fiji Islands



5—JUNKYARD DOG
260, New Orleans, LA

- 6—HULK HOGAN
320, Venice Beach, CA
- 7—KERRY VON ERICH
251, Denton, TX
- 8—MIKE ROTONDO
245, Syracuse, NY
- 9—MAGNUM T.A.
245, Chesapeake, VA
- 10—ICEMAN PARSONS
242, St. Louis, MO



3—RON BASS
285, Pampa, TX



4—HACKSAW REED
249, Kansas City, MO



5—KING KONG BUNDY
420, Atlantic City, NJ

- 6—NICK BOCKWINKEL
245, Beverly Hills, CA
- 7—KEN PATERA
256, Portland, OR
- 8—THE IRON SHEIK
262, Teheran, Iran
- 9—JIM GARVIN
235, Tampa, FL
- 10—DICK SLATER
235, Tampa, FL



2—KEN PATERA & CRUSHER BLACKWELL



3—BRETT & BUZZ SAWYER



- 4—MIKE ROTONDO & MIKE DAVIS
- 5—SUPER DESTROYERS I & II
- 6—MR. WRESTLING II & MAGNUM T.A.
- 7—ROCKY JOHNSON & TONY ATLAS
- 8—ELIJAH AKEEM & KAREEM MUHAMMAD
- 9—TONY PARISI & GINO BRITO
- 10—THE MASKED MEDICS

MIKE ROTONDO KEEPS having the same dream.

"I'm standing in a corner of a wrestling ring," he said. "It's in a huge outdoor stadium, and there are thousands of fans watching. They're screaming in English, in French, in German, in Spanish—they're from all over the world."

"There's a giant stalking me from across the ring. He's almost seven feet tall. He has big, powerful biceps, hands twice the size of mine, a tremendous chest, and long, strong legs. He looks like one of those fantasy characters from Marvel Comics. Except he has no face. I mean no eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hair—nothing. He looks like a mannequin, very scary."

"He comes toward me, and at the last possible moment I duck under his legs. The crowd cheers. I get up and throw a dropkick at his back. I put everything I can into it, and he slams chestfirst into the turnbuckles. He's dazed, but this guy isn't gonna fall that easily."

"The crowd starts to cheer 'spin him, spin him!' I think to myself, How? He's a giant. But the fans keep chanting. I decide to give it a try. I'll try to catch him by surprise with the airplane spin, I say to myself. I grab him and start to lift him onto my shoulders. I close my eyes, say a prayer to myself, and lift with my legs. I start spinning. He almost falls on me. Finally, I drop him onto the mat and I cover him. The referee counts one, two, and ...

"And then I wake up."

As bizarre as this dream sounds, the current U.S. tag team (with Mike Davis) and Florida State champion says he looks forward to it when he goes to sleep. "I wish I could control the dream," he said laughing. "I figure if I can speed things up a little, maybe I can get the pinfall before I wake up."

Rotondo doesn't make a single move, against an opponent or concerning his career, without a great deal of thought. Since graduating from Syracuse University with de-

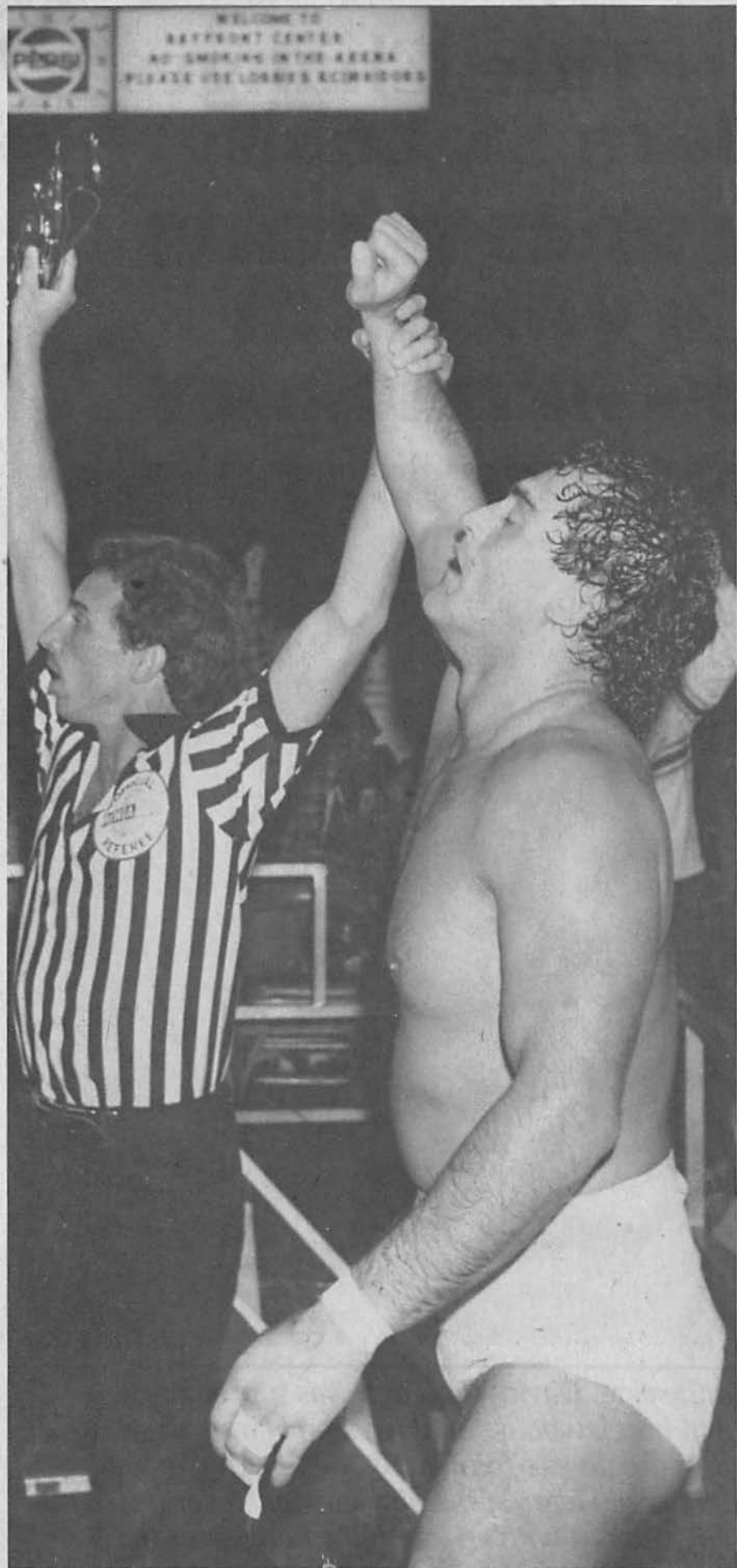
Mike Rotondo's Solid Gold Future:

READY TO RULE THE NWA



Kendo Nagasaki is the unwilling victim of a Rotondo airplane spin (above). Mike drops his 245 pounds on Ron Bass's chest (below). One Man Gang, his wrist being twisted, grimaces in pain (right).





Mike Rotondo has a dream of becoming NWA World champion. Having won two of the sport's most prestigious regional titles, Rotondo has proven his talent. But he is also mature enough to realize that there is a large gap between regional titles and the world title. He is working hard to close that gap

grees in business administration and speech communication, each career decision Rotondo has made has been a result of careful calculation. He began his career in Europe "because I wanted to develop a different style than most American-trained wrestlers. I thought it would give me an advantage." He moved on to Canada to learn from legendary stars like Edouard Carpentier. From Canada, Rotondo traveled to the Mid-Atlantic region, where he competed against some of the finest talent in professional wrestling.

His arrival in Florida and his quick climb up the state rankings surprised the fans, but not those who knew of his background. "Tondo's my man," said Dusty Rhodes. "He's a smart boy, and he works damn hard. You should see Mike in the gym. He's in there every day. You'd think he was training to wrestle Paul Bunyan and his ol' blue ox, Babe. He's gonna make it, all the way to the top of the ladder. He deserves it. And remember, Stardust knows what he's talking about."

Rotondo negotiated with promoters from around the country before deciding to compete in Florida. After receiving a top 10 ranking within just a few months, many veteran observers claimed that he moved up so quickly by wrestling

(Continued on page 56)

Missouri Title Changes Hands In St. Louis:

HARLEY RACE TEACHES DAVID VON ERICH A LESSON IN TRICKERY

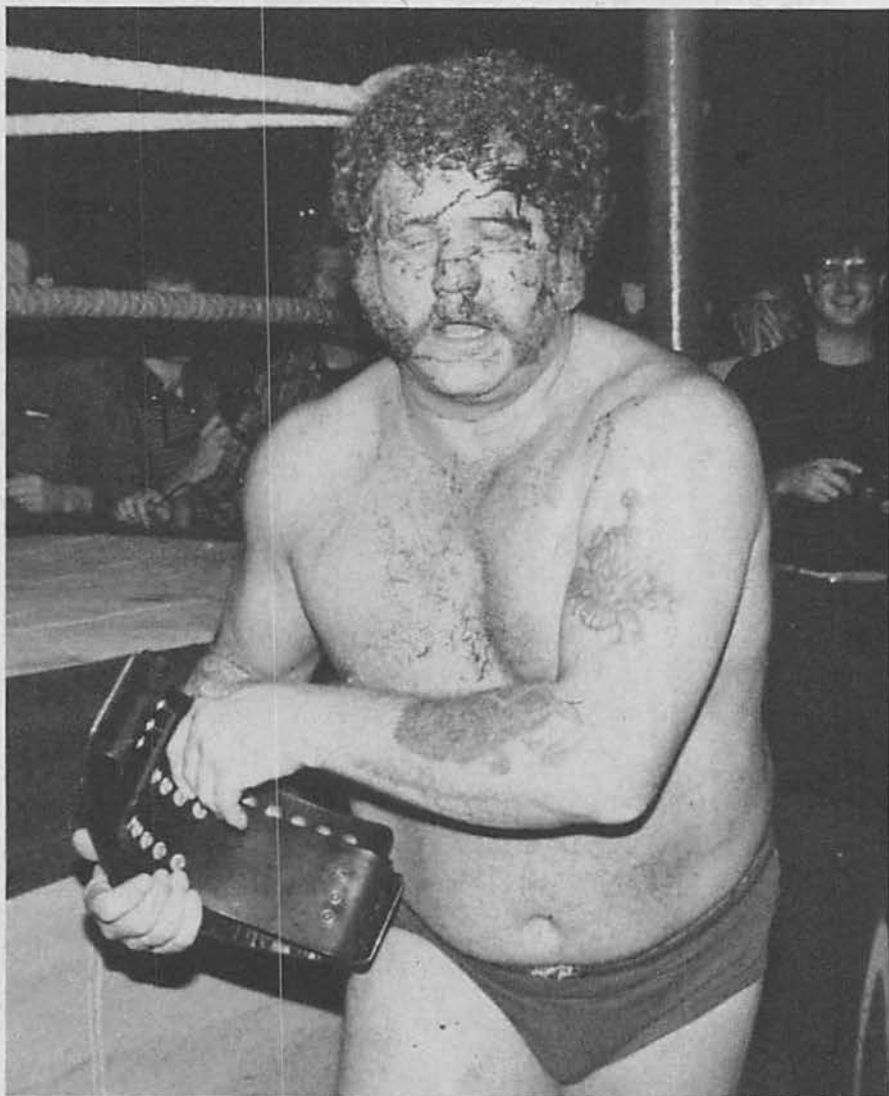
THE ONLY SOUND in David Von Erich's dressing room was of the water that flowed from the faucet, over and through his hands, into the sink, and down the drain. Intermixed with the sweat and salt of physical exertion were the crimson droplets of Harley Race's blood.

The relative silence of the dressing room was a stark contrast to the scene of which Von Erich was the center only minutes earlier.

Chaos. Cacophony. The iron grip of the Von Erich claw welded to the forehead of seven-time NWA World champion Harley Race. A standing-room-only crowd in the Kiel Auditorium screaming in emotional frenzy.

And now: silence.

The realization that he had lost the Missouri title to Race had come easily to Von Erich; he's faced losing before. But as he buttoned his flannel shirt and slipped on his cowboy boots, David was just beginning to understand how and why his opponent had managed to win the title—when it seemed certain that Race



Before stepping into the ring, David Von Erich was supremely confident. He knew that his clawhold could weaken Harley Race enough to enable him to score an easy pinfall. By the time the match was over, Von Erich would learn a valuable lesson: Never underestimate a cunning veteran with an insatiable hunger for the Missouri State title



would go home that night with a notch in the loss column.

"Carelessness," Von Erich said matter-of-factly, "pure and utter carelessness. And overconfidence. I should have known. I should have planned for it. It cost me the title, and I can't say I blame him. If I were in his position, I might have tried to get away with the same thing."

Von Erich spoke as if he actually respected Race for the manner in which he had won the Missouri title.

"Hey, I have to give Race credit," Von Erich admitted. "He's been in this sport long enough to know that when you have one referee in a match, and that referee is concentrating on one area of the ring, all other areas become fair game. So he took a chance. He used his foot for leverage against the rope and scored a pin. The ref didn't see it. That's what he was hoping for, and he got it."

"My stupidity was in not realizing what he was doing at that precise time," David continued. "Sure, I realize now, but now I can't do anything about it. Had I figured out what Race was doing in those three seconds that the referee's hand slapped the mat, I might have been able to do something then and there."

"But I was overconfident," Von Erich said. "I never thought he'd

Race lines up Von Erich for a kneedrop (above left). Because he's standing outside the ring, David thinks better of using the clawhold. Instead he slams his challenger's head into the ringpost (above right).



Blood begins to trickle from Race's head as he becomes the victim of the Von Erich claw (above). Referee Sonny Myers checks to see if Von Erich's shoulders are touching the mat. The former NWA champ bites David's hand to escape the submission hold (below).



try anything that sneaky in front of a sold-out crowd. And I figured that my clawhold had weakened him enough earlier in the match that he wouldn't even be able to try something like that in the first place."

Underestimation of one's opponent. It's the biggest mistake any professional wrestler can make, and it is often the reason why champions lose their titles.

It's a mistake that Harley Race says he hasn't made in years.

"How else do you think I was able to capture seven NWA World titles?" Race asked rhetorically.

(Continued on page 58)

HOTSEAT

IRON SHEIK "I DROVE BOB BACKLUND OUT OF WRESTLING"

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY STEPHEN MEDWID

THE BALANCE OF power has shifted drastically in the WWF in the last few months, primarily due to the influence of The Iron Sheik.

Managed by "Ayatollah" Fred Blassie, the Sheik captured the WWF heavyweight championship from Bob Backlund in New York's Madison Square Garden on December 26, 1983, ending a title reign that had begun on February 20, 1978.

Many people attribute Backlund's loss to a brutal attack by the Sheik several days prior to that match in which the popular champion suffered injuries to his neck, back, and shoulders.

As the date for the Madison Square Garden rematch grew nearer, Backlund's condition, worsened by the excruciatingly painful camel clutch that the Sheik used to win the title, dictated that he step aside.

The WWF determined that the new number one contender was Hulk Hogan. Taking Backlund's place in the rematch on January 23, Hogan captured the WWF title from The Iron Sheik.

Assistant Editor Stephen Medwid spoke with The Iron Sheik at his New York hotel shortly after he was dethroned by Hogan.

Q: I have a lot of questions, Iron Sheik, but first I want to . . .

A: I'm not answering any of your questions right now. First thing I have to say is that I am pro-

“

Hulk Hogan has bought off all the commissioners and officials in the WWF. He has a hatred for Iran that is unreasonable, and he wanted to take that hatred out on me.

”

testing. This decision that was made by WWF commissioners and ratings committee was an outrage. I train for months to wrestle Bob Backlund. I wrestled Backlund and won the WWF title. My contract says a rematch must be allowed, and I am ready to wrestle Backlund once again, but instead they say

Hulk Hogan is number one contender. That is a lie! That is a disgrace! That is a perfect example of American idiocy and conspiracy against Ayatollah Khomeini and the glory of Iranian excellence.

Q: Now wait a second. Back up here. You said that Hulk Hogan's designation as number one contender is a lie?

A: Absolutely. A lie and a sham.

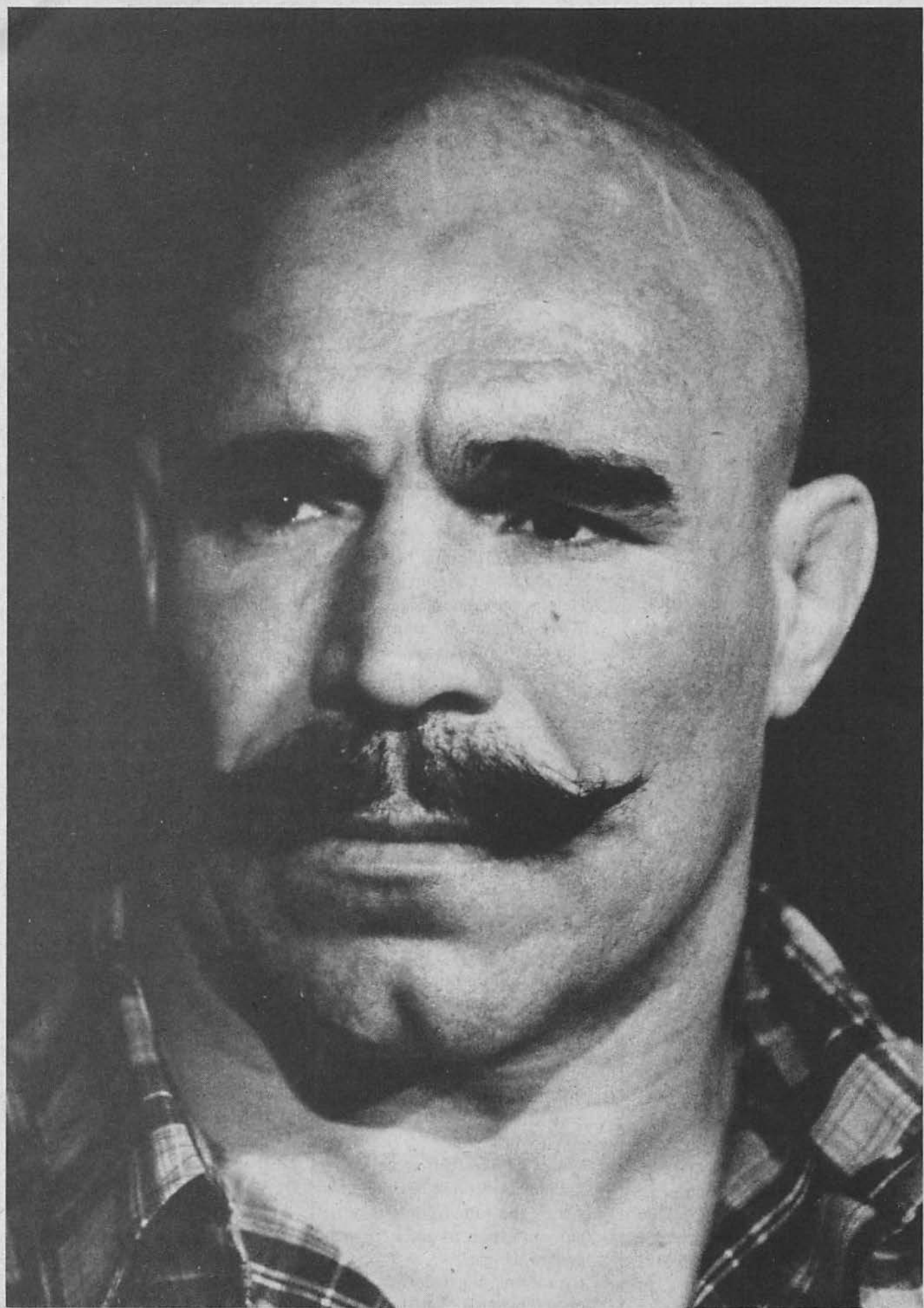
Q: Why?

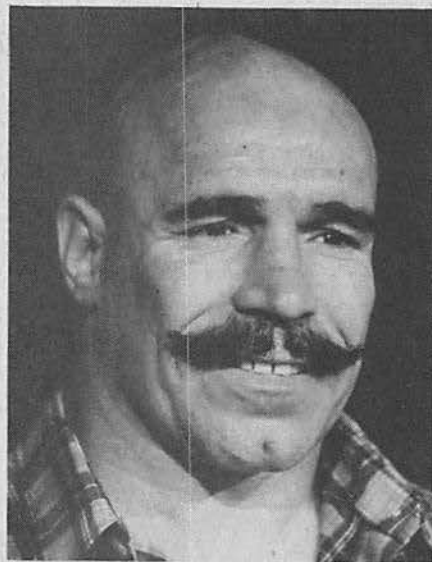
A: Well, it's all obvious, isn't it?

Q: Why don't you tell our readers in your own words?

A: I'll tell your readers. I'll tell them that Hulk Hogan has bought off all the commissioners and officials in the WWF. He has a hatred for Iran that is unreasonable, and he wanted to take that hatred out on me. What did Hogan do to earn that title match? He wrestled one week and was made number one contender? No! No! That is completely wrong! My contract was to wrestle Bob Backlund, not Hulk Hogan.

Q: Then why did you wrestle Hogan?





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Bob Backlund is gone for good. He is afraid to return to the ring because he might have to wrestle me again.

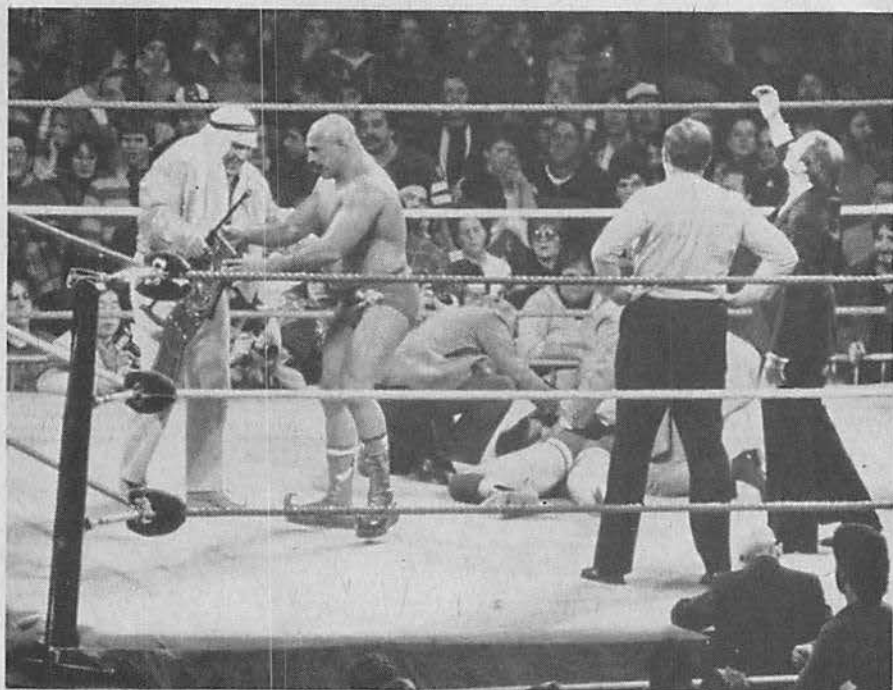
Almost six years as WWF champion, snuffed out like the flame of a cheap candle.

”

A: I am Iranian. I am a man of honor. I wrestled Hogan because I signed a contract to wrestle that night in Madison Square Garden. I fulfilled my part of the contract, but Backlund failed to fulfill his. I am a man of honor, Backlund is not.

Q: But Backlund was injured.

A: That's right, Backlund was injured! Hahaha! Ha! Backlund was injured because of the pain and torture of the camel clutch. Backlund was injured because he is too weak to face someone of my skill and ability. He was even too weak to perform once the exercise that I perform every day with my Iranian exercise clubs. And have you seen Backlund wrestling again since then? Have you seen Backlund in the ring since I captured the WWF title from him? No! I drove Bob Backlund out of wrestling, and he is gone for



Having disposed of Bob Backlund, The Iron Sheik and his manager, Fred Blassie, took possession of the WWF belt. They would only hold the belt for four weeks, however.

good. He is afraid. He is afraid to return to the ring because he might have to wrestle me again. He's gone. Almost six years as WWF champion, snuffed out like the flame of a cheap candle. *Ptooi!* I spit on his memory and wish him good riddance.

Q: Your match with Hogan in Madison Square Garden was not one of your better moments. How do you feel about the loss?

A: I have told you already. I was not properly prepared to wrestle Hogan. It was a conspiracy. A conspiracy between Hogan, Backlund, the WWF officials and commissioners. All of them. They have hatred for the Ayatollah, and they do not want to see Iranian excellence representing the WWF.

Q: But five minutes and 40 seconds, that's all it took for Hogan to beat you.

A: What is the difference, five minutes or 50 minutes? The result is the same: conspiracy.

Q: Do you expect to get a rematch against Hogan?

A: I want one, but I do not expect one. Obviously you do not lis-

ten to me when I say this has been a conspiracy against the glory of Iran. If you were paying attention, you would have heard that night in Madison Square Garden when they announced Hogan's first title defense that I was not being allowed a rematch. Hogan has chosen to defend his title against Paul Orndorff.

Q: Why do you think that is?

A: Again, this is all obvious, is it not? I am not a stupid man. I am confident that if I were allowed to wrestle Hogan again I would be able to regain the belt. I know now how to adjust the camel clutch for maximum effectiveness against Hogan. But the WWF commissioners won't sanction the match. They are afraid of my abilities. They are afraid of an Iranian wearing the belt. They know I will defeat Hogan if given the chance, so they will not give me the chance.

Q: Where does The Iron Sheik go from here?

A: I am presently speaking and negotiating in depth with my manager, the Ayatollah Fred Blassie, and I will soon be

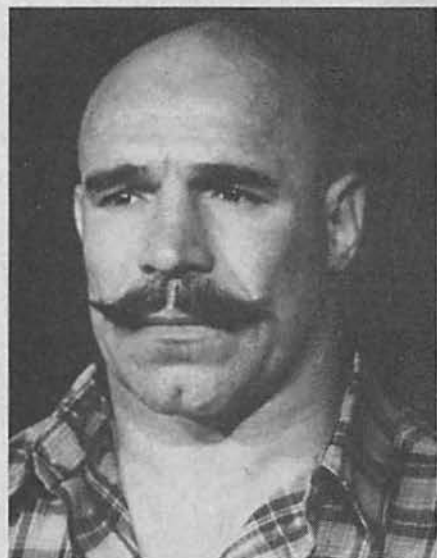
coming to a decision regarding my future here in the WWF. We may decide to file a lawsuit against WWF officials regarding their refusal to provide me with a title match. We may decide to look toward the Intercontinental championship. Perhaps I will choose a tag team partner and annihilate [WWF tag team champions] Rocky Johnson and Tony Atlas. Perhaps I will leave the WWF area.

Q: So what you're saying is that you're not certain about the future?

A: There is an old Iranian proverb: "The future never becomes the present, but the present invariably shapes that which becomes tomorrow."

Q: So?

A: So what I'm saying is I'm not certain about the future, and even if I were, I wouldn't allow you to print it in your standard American magazine for all eyes to read. I keep my plans for the future to myself. Those who need to know what I have planned will learn soon enough. And then—it will be too late for them. □



“

I'm not certain about the future. We may decide to file a lawsuit against the WWF officials regarding their refusal to provide me with a title match.

”



The Iron Sheik attacks Backlund before the bell (left). Hogan does the same to the Sheik (below).



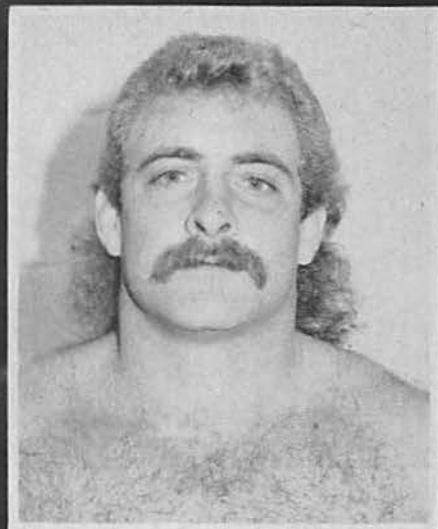


Things haven't been right between Mr. Wrestling II and Magnum T.A. for some time now. Recently, the masked wrestler's bid for Nick Bockwinkel's AWA title ended in failure, and Wrestling II placed the blame on his young protege. Depending on how Magnum T.A. reacts to II's charges, the sport might have to prepare itself for one of its saddest feuds ever

IT WAS LATE enough in the day that the lunchtime businessman's crowd had left the gym, and the after-work crowd would still be busy at their offices or in their factories for another two hours.

Mr. Wrestling II pedaled away on one of the stationary bicycles that lined a mirrored wall of the gym. An electronic panel mounted on the bicycle frame recorded Wrestling II's pulse rate through a wire that attached to his wrist, and dis-

DID MAGNUM T.A. COST MR. WRESTLING II THE AWA TITLE?



Mr. Wrestling II tries to power his way out of Nick Bockwinkel's headlock by pushing his right hand into the AWA champion's chin. Wrestling II feels he would have beaten Bockwinkel if Magnum T.A. (inset) had helped him train, as he had promised he would.

Photos by Alice Marie Nelson

played the speed he was pedaling in miles per hour.

"I don't really enjoy jogging," II said. "I get the same cardio-vascular workout from the bike, and with all these gadgets here, I can keep track of how my heart is reacting to the strain I'm putting on it. Jogging can ruin your legs, too. Shin splints, sprained ankles—there's no reason to risk those kinds of injuries when you don't have to."

The mirror behind him showed

that the gym was empty. It shouldn't have been. Wrestling II was expecting someone to join him. Growing impatient, he got off the bicycle and walked into the hallway to look at a clock mounted on the wall.

"He's still not here!" II said. "I don't know what the hell is going on. He never shows up anymore. If he's not gonna be here, the least he can do is tell me honestly that he doesn't want to be here."

Wrestling II was waiting for Terry "Magnum T.A." Allen. II has for last few months been acting as Allen's coach, but for his recent challenge of AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel, he had asked Allen to help *him* train. Magnum failed to show up for any of the scheduled training sessions, however.

"I can't say exactly how much it had to do with the Bockwinkel decision," II said, referring to the dou-

(Continued on page 62)



Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING

NEW YORK, NY: It's not that I mind so much the idea of seeing the WWF belt around the waist of Hulk Hogan. Actually, Hogan is the kind of a man who, when you look at him, seems naked *without* a championship belt. It's amazing that Nick Bockwinkel was able to hold him off so many times.



HULK HOGAN VS. THE IRON SHEIK

What disturbs me about Hogan being champion is that the Hulk Hogan *should not* have been in the ring on January 23 at Madison Square Garden to wrestle The Iron Sheik in the first place. How the WWF could have called him the number one contender after Hogan was in the WWF area for only about a week, and wrestled on TV only once (with former WWF champion Bob Backlund as his partner), well, the only word that comes to my mind is: injustice. What about Jimmy Snuka? Fans have been clamoring for months for another title match for the "Superfly." What about Tito Santana? He's

been in the WWF longer than Hogan. So have Rocky Johnson and Tony Atlas and Ivan Putski. All of these men were more deserving of a title shot than Hogan. But Hogan was a new and exciting force in the WWF. He had the momentum of the commissioners and the fans on his side, momentum that owes itself to blind emotion rather than logical reason. Because if reason and logic had ruled the day, Hogan would never have been allowed to wrestle for the title.

ATLANTA, GA: What Ted DiBiase has done goes beyond reprehension. This man should be banned from the sport of wrestling permanently. He destroyed Bob Armstrong—broke both his cheekbones and ripped his face to a bloody pulp. Armstrong is going to require extensive plastic surgery, and all bets are off as to when he'll be able to return to the ring. Meanwhile, DiBiase goes his merry way, loading his glove and leaving more bloody damage in his wake. A recent match in The Omni here saw Johnny Rich substituting for Bob Armstrong. What happened to Johnny? You guessed it: DiBiase loaded his glove and made a bloody mess out of him. Fortunately, Pistol Pez Whatley, Ronnie Garvin, and "The Masked Mr. R" ran out of the dressing room to help Johnny before DiBiase could do too much damage. The Masked Mr. R? Well, you remember how DiBiase ran Tommy Rich out of wrestling, supposedly for good? Nice try, Ted. Too bad the loopholes in the NWA bylaws don't support the contract that had the Loser Leave Wrestling clause in it.

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO: I had a chance to spend a week down here recently. Saw a lot of great matches, but the best part of my stay was when I had the opportunity to talk with the World Wrestling Council Universal heavyweight champion, Carlos Colon. Always a gentleman, Carlos is one of the

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor

most underrated wrestlers in the sport today. That's mainly due to the lack of magazine and television coverage given the WWC. But the good news is that this lack of coverage is coming to an end. Carlos was involved in the highly publicized "Starrcade '83" Thanksgiving show in Greensboro, North Carolina, and more and more fans are sitting up and taking notice of his awesome skills every day. Now fans throughout the New York area are able to see Colon weekly, courtesy of a new wrestling show carried by one of the metropolitan area's leading Spanish language television stations. And soon, Big Apple wrestling fans may get to see Colon in person. When I was talking with Carlos in Puerto Rico, he expressed his hopes for defending his WWC Universal title in New York. Carlos Colon: man on the move. Keep an eye on him, because I have a hunch you'll be hearing a lot more from this superb athlete in the very near future.

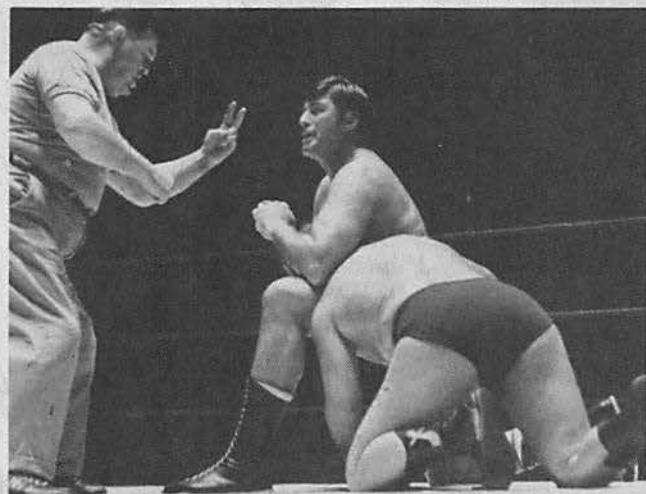
TAMPA, FL: Picture this: Ric Flair is strutting out of the Hall of Fame hotel in Tampa. As he's waiting for his limousine, a second limo pulls up and a beautiful girl steps out and smiles. Flair returns the smile. They start talking. She says she's working for a third party who wants to pay \$5,000 for Ric's contract to wrestle Ron Bass. Flair, figuring on being paid five grand for a night off, makes the deal.



RIC FLAIR

The girl returns to the limo and, as it's driving off, Dirty Yellow Dog sticks his head out of the window and waves the contract in the air. Flair has been had! Now Dirty Yellow Dog gets to wrestle Bass, and we all know how Bass has been avoiding *that* match. Flair is reportedly angry about the deal, but why? After all, five grand is five grand, and what should it matter to Flair if Dog wants to wrestle Bass? Might as let them settle their own feud, Flair, no need to get involved where it's not necessary. If I were you, I'd take the money and run!

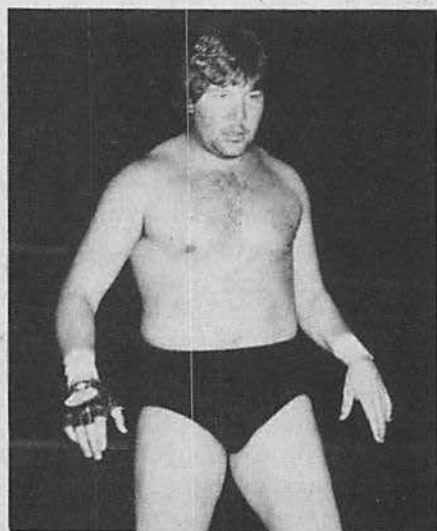
TORONTO, ONTARIO: Unfortunately, I must close this month's column on a sad note. Lord Athol Layton died of a heart attack on the morning of January 18 at the age of 63. Layton, one of



LORD ATHOL LAYTON

Canada's most popular wrestlers until his retirement in 1976, devoted much of his spare time to helping various charities. Throughout his career, the physically imposing Layton (he stood 6'5" and weighed 270 pounds) wrestled in over 3,500 matches on three continents. Arriving in Canada from his native Australia in 1950, Layton came to love the Great White North. He used to say that he was "an Australian by birth, but a Canadian by choice." He was one of the most loved of Toronto's citizens, and he will be sorely missed by Toronto in particular and by wrestling fans in general. Goodbye, Lord Layton, you were, and always will be, one of the greats. □

ONE ON ONE



TED DiBIASE

(Ted DiBiase and Tommy Rich were once the closest of friends, but that aspect of their relationship seems to have been forgotten long ago. While Rich still commands the love of wrestling fans everywhere, DiBiase has earned their hatred. That hatred has been amplified by several recent incidents: DiBiase wrestled in and won a Loser Leave Wrestling Match against Rich; DiBiase has been waging a campaign against Tommy's cousin, Johnny Rich; DiBiase brutally attacked Bob Armstrong, breaking both cheekbones and causing Bob to undergo plastic surgery treat-



Picturephones courtesy of Bell Telephone

ment for the injury. The mutual hatred between Rich and DiBiase has reached an unprecedented level of intensity. In light of these developments, Inside Wrestling decided to bring these two men together to discuss their differences . . . "One on One.")

The telephone wires will heat up every month when two top wrestlers rage and argue. This is the unedited transcript of their conversation, a chance for you to see what happens when two wrestlers look each other in the eyes and go One On One

NONE



Simulated photos

TED DiBIASE:

I don't even know why I should lower myself to speaking to someone like you, Rich. You're a loser. A loser and an outlaw. After you lost the match, you didn't leave wrestling. You continued to wrestle in Georgia, Tennessee, and Ohio. You know, a competent lawyer could have you thrown into jail for breaking

the terms of a contract like that.

TOMMY RICH:

I didn't break any terms of any contract, DiBiase, I had matches that were already signed for before I wrestled you, and all I did was fulfill those contracts. As for lawyers, I've got my own lawyer looking into the terms of our Loser Leave Wrestling con-



TOMMY RICH

tract. You'll be happy to know that there are quite a few loopholes in that agreement!

TD: Loopholes? The only loophole is the one between your ears, Rich. This is it. You're gone. Done. Finished. You'll never wrestle again. And all your stupid, pitiful, wailing, crying fans can't do a damn thing to help you.

TR: You're speaking mighty big, there, DiBiase, but why don't you admit the truth? Why don't you admit, in front of all the readers of this magazine, the truth about why you tried to weasel a Loser Leave Wrestling contract out of . . .

TD: Weasel? I didn't weasel anything. Everything I did was fair and above board, and very simply I drove you out of

(Continued on page 48)

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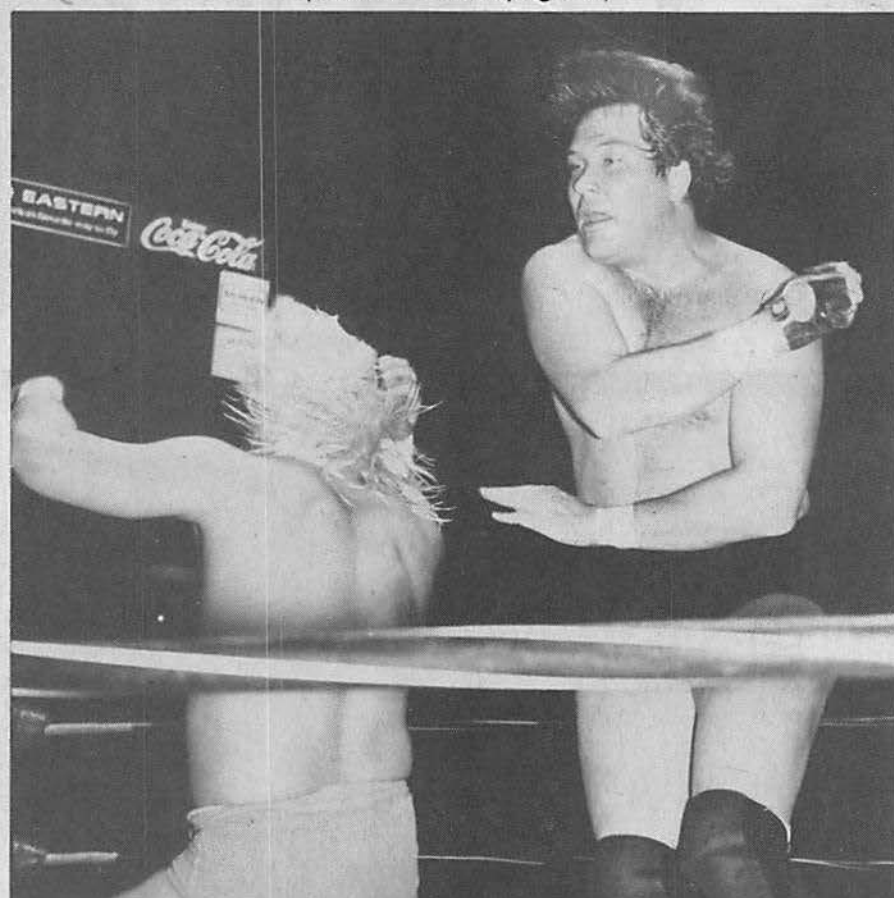
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ONE ON ONE

(Continued from page 47)



DiBiase hits Tommy Rich from behind with his loaded glove, setting up the victory that supposedly forced Rich out of wrestling. Most people believe that Rich continues to wrestle as the "Mysterious Mr. R."

wrestling. Permanently. Forever. Obviously the reality of the situation hasn't sunk into your thick skull.

TR: Listen, DiBiase, I'm not out of wrestling. I'll be back. I'll be back stronger than ever, and when I do come back it's gonna be your butt that gets sliced up like baloney. I don't like being made a fool of, DiBiase, and . . .

TD: You don't need me to make a fool out of you, Rich. You do a fine job of that all by yourself.

TR: Right. Sure. Fast talking Ted. Quick with the comebacks. But not quick enough to escape getting burned by Wildfire.

TD: Is that a threat?

TR: That's a promise. I'm going after you not only for what you've done to me, or should

I say what you've tried to do to me, but for what you've done to Bob Armstrong.

TD: What I did for Armstrong was a favor. I turned his face into mush. Broke both his cheekbones. Now he's got to get plastic surgery done, and he's got a once in a lifetime chance to improve his looks. Maybe if the doctors do a real good job on him, if they improve his looks a real lot, he'll only be ugly!

TR: Funny guy, Ted, you're a funny guy. I wonder how hard you'll laugh with all your teeth kicked down your throat.

TD: You talk mighty big over the phone, Rich, but I notice you didn't wrestle so hot once you stepped into the ring. You know, you ought to thank me. I did you a favor. Now that

you're out of wrestling permanently, you'll be spared the embarrassment of making an idiot out of yourself in front of thousands of fans every night.

TR: Rave on, DiBiase, rave on.

TD: The truth hurts, doesn't it? And the truth is that you're as bad a wrestler and as worthless a man as that punk cousin of yours.

TR: Johnny has more wrestling talent in his left arm . . .

TD: Than you have in your right arm? Come on, Rich, who do you think you're kidding? In a battle of wits against me, you're an unarmed man. In a battle of wrestling skills, you're hopelessly overmatched. Give it up. Go back to pumping gas somewhere. That's about all you're good for anyway.

TR: You run your mouth an awful lot, DiBiase. But just wait. The next time you step into the ring with me, a lot more than your mouth will be running. Your feet will be running, and the yellow streak that covers your back will be showing, and you'll be shown up for what you really are: a coward. The biggest coward in professional wrestling, or any other sport for that matter. You tried to run me out of wrestling because you're afraid of what I can do to you once we get into that ring. It didn't work. It's not going to work. You'd better be afraid, DiBiase, because you've got hell to pay, and Wildfire's gonna burn you to a cinder. Then it's you who'll pay, boy, it's you who'll be out of wrestling for good, and it won't be because of any damn contract, either. It'll be because of pain and suffering, and I can't think of anyone who deserves it more.

TD: Big words from a little man. Goodbye, little man. ☐

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DRESSING ROOM

(Continued from page 10)

your family," master of ceremonies Gordon Solie told Rhodes. "So today we have brought someone from your family here to see you!"

A curtain was drawn, and there stood Dusty's young blonde-haired sister, Connie. Rhodes, shocked and elated, rushed to his sister and gave her a bearhug. Dusty's friends, including Dirty Yellow Dog, Mike Davis, and Mike Rotondo, joined in the happy celebration.

Then it happened.

Someone in the crowd of people reached for the bottle of ink Rhodes was to use to sign for his title match and threw it in Dusty's direction. The ink missed Rhodes and splashed into Connie's eyes! It wasn't difficult to pick out the perpetrator. It was the man with the painted face. The man who had been banned from Florida for a full year. The evil one. Kevin Sullivan.

Sullivan has never committed a more heinous act. And had it not been for the wrestlers on hand, he surely would not have survived Rhodes' retaliatory attack. Believe me, they were not protecting Sullivan; they were protecting Rhodes from facing possible criminal charges.

The wrestling community acted quickly after the incident. Too quickly for Dusty's taste. Jerry Jarrett, the president of the Southern Promoters Association, has permanently banned Sullivan from wrestling in the South, and Paul Boesch has banned him from Texas. This leaves Rhodes without a battleground for revenge. And he is extremely angry about that. He has promised to quit wrestling unless Sullivan is reinstated.

This is not to be taken as merely a threat. Dusty is very seri-



Dusty Rhodes thanks Gordon Solie and Buddy Colt for reuniting him with his sister, Connie (above). Seconds later, Connie would have ink thrown in her eyes by Kevin Sullivan and it would take several men to stop Dusty from tearing him apart (below).



ous about this. The love for his sister extends far beyond his love of being a wrestler. There is little to keep him from retiring. Even if he were to never work again, he would have enough money to live comfortably for the rest of his life. He has won two world titles and accomplished everything else there is to accomplish in this sport. He now views wrestling only as a legal means by which he can gain revenge against Sulli-

van. Denied a chance to accomplish that goal, he will leave the sport.

Somewhere in the future, perhaps even as long as a year from now, Sullivan will have served his suspension and he'll be back. If we lose Dusty now, he'll never be back. Evil will have triumphed over good because good will have been denied the right to fight back. That would be very sad, indeed. ☐



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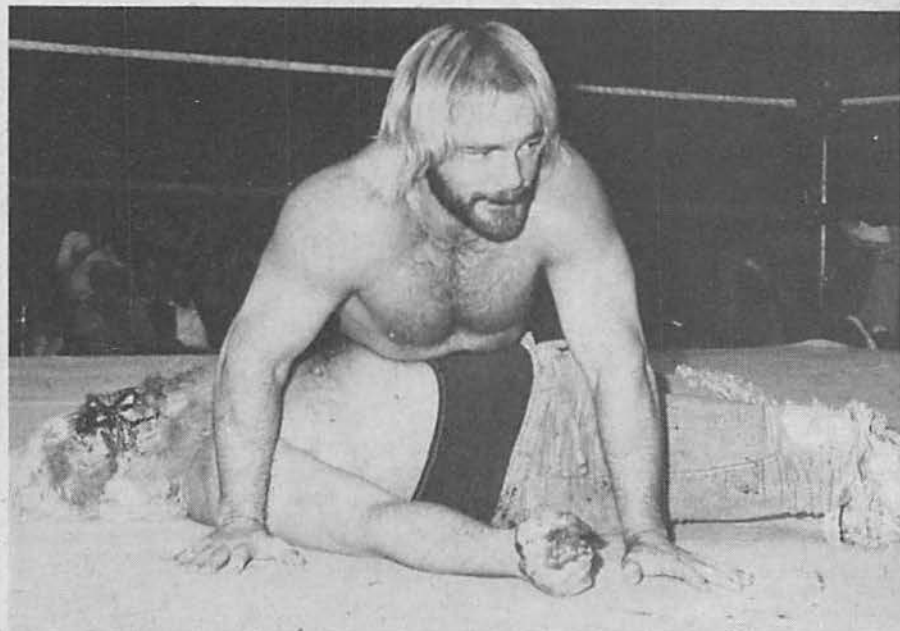
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THE INSIDER

(Continued from page 20)



Steve Keirn covers a nearly unconscious Moondog Spot en route to winning a Loser Leave Town tag team match for The Fabulous Ones.

they enter the ring.

Most experts agree that The Fab Ones and the Express are two great tag teams, and the cheers attest to the fact that everyone loves them. But let me pose this question: Which is the better team?

"We are," Gibson said.

"Stan and I," Keirn replied.

I expected this. It's a natural response. Each has to believe that they're the best. The belief of invincibility is important to success in wrestling.

"We've been around a little longer than them," Keirn said. "And we're veterans. Our careers started a long time before we became The Fabulous Ones. We've also both been tag team partners with other wrestlers. All of that experience helps us. I think it gives you a sense of . . . anticipation. Sometimes, I can see in my mind what my opponent is going to do next. I think you only develop that sense with experience."

Gibson reasoned that youth gives his team the advantage. "Steve and Stan aren't as young as we are. They're not ready to pack it in, not by a long shot, but they have been

through some wars. That has an effect on a wrestler. It slows him down. I know we're faster than they are. I also think we take more chances than they do. Sure, sometimes those chances backfire on you, but sometimes they don't. If you're good, those chances will fall in your favor more often than not. And we are good."

Possibly if one of these teams moved on to another part of the country, each would get more attention and more title shots. But they are both happy just where they are.

"This is the perfect place to be," Lane said. "Where else can a tag team get so much good competition? There's a wealth of it here. I'd rather stay here with everyone else and wrestle in some really competitive matches than go somewhere and win a title that really doesn't mean too much."

Morton agreed. "The best teams are right here. I think that at least one team from the Mid-Southern region will win the AWA World title within the year. And it will be a credit to all of us. We've all made each other better." □

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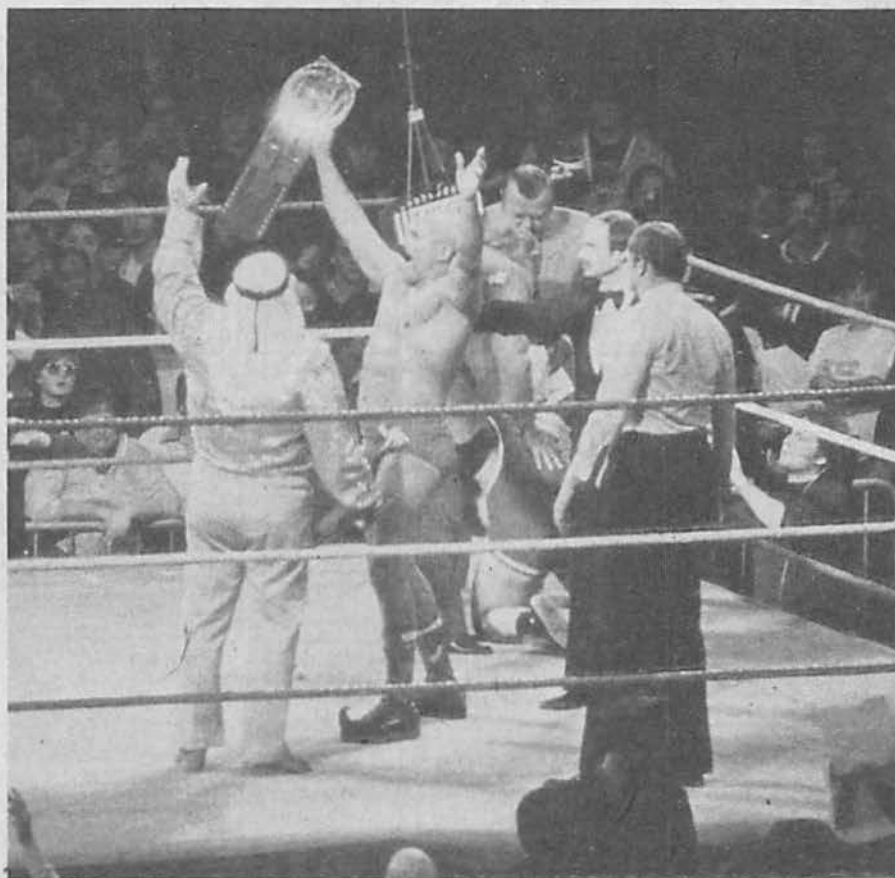
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BODYSLAMS & PINFALLS

(Continued from page 18)



In view of the prejudice WWF officials had shown toward Backlund throughout his reign, The Iron Sheik and Fred Blassie had to overcome near-impossible odds to win the title. Backlund's manager, Arnold Skaaland, seeing to his injured wrestler, should be commended for throwing in the towel.

when discussing the Backlund title era. His ruthless bribing of referees, his failure to wrestle many legitimate contenders, and his hypocritical "good deeds" can only infuriate a lover of the sport. His desecration of the WWF belt's dignity reduced its importance in the eyes of the world. The Iron Sheik will have a difficult time in bringing back the respect the belt once enjoyed. Because of Backlund's cowardly and limited defense, we can only consider the belt a regional title. Iron Sheik will have to struggle to return it to world champion status, equal to the AWA and NWA belts. It may take years for that to happen. Another year of Backlund's reign might have made the task impossible.

Backlund's depravity extended outside the wrestling ring as well. His sanctimonious drivelling slandered the reputations of many fine

men. His almost pathological insistence on being the hero caused decent and honorable men to be considered evil. One can only despise this tawdry tactic. One can only despise the man who would do it.

At least we will now be spared the ludicrous sight of Backlund exercising. Why he subjected America to watching him take the Harvard Step Test is a question only another egomaniac could answer. For those fortunate enough to have missed it, let me explain that Bobby bounced up and down a small set of steps for what seemed forever. This proved Backlund could do the most boring physical exercise for a very long period of time. Only a brain as deficient as his could allow a body to repeat the same worthless task over and over. We were supposed to applaud his stamina. Now that he's no longer champion, we will be spared

such other spectacles as Backlund slapping himself in the face for hours, setting the world's record for repeatedly running into a brick wall, and holding his breath until he turns blue. For sparing us this, we owe The Iron Sheik a debt we can never repay.

It would be wrong to ignore Backlund's matches. Never has a man been champion for so long without showing any physical superiority over his opponents. Even the bribed referees could barely manage to save his title against Sgt. Slaughter, Ken Patera, Magnificent Muraco, Superstar Billy Graham, and Greg Valentine. The entire list of those from whom the title was stolen could fill this column. The double standard that allowed Backlund to break any rule will always be synonymous with wrestling infamy. We can spend all day recalling the times his opponents were disqualified for phantom infractions that could only be seen by those on Backlund's payroll. The rage he engendered makes it impossible to recount his disgraces and maintain journalistic neutrality. A despicable man mired the WWF in a disgraceful period from which it may never fully recover.

It is a testament to Iron Sheik's greatness that he managed to trap Backlund in a position where even the paid-off referee couldn't help him. Skoaland should have ended the match earlier, but he kept looking at the referee to do something, invent a reason to give the match to Backlund. When that proved impossible, Skoaland did the only logical thing.

It is ironic that Backlund, a man who turned disgrace into an art form, should be disgraced for the one professional moment in his title reign. Bob Backlund shouldn't be criticized for surrendering. It only keeps us from damning the man for his real sins, almost six years worth of matches that can only be recalled with a feeling of outrage and shame. □

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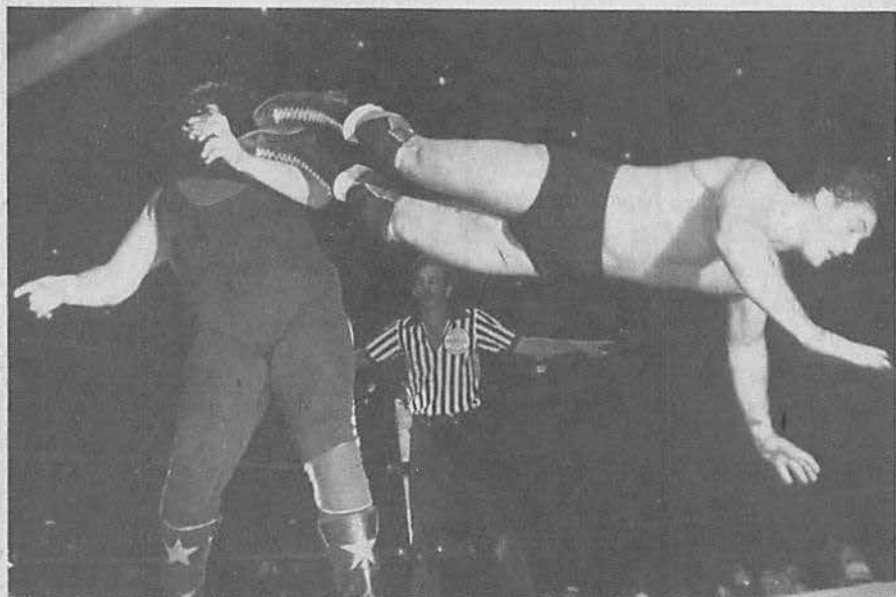
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MIKE ROTONDO

(Continued from page 35)



Rotondo learned quickly that it takes more than one dropkick to move a mountain like One Man Gang (above). Kareem Muhammad appears to be stunned by the strength of this young superstar (bottom).

inferior competition.

"That's absolutely false," he said. "Critics see a young wrestler and say things like, 'Oh, he's wrestled a lot of nobodies. He's protecting himself from the tough matches.' Well, I've won the Southern title, the Florida title, and the U.S. tag team title *twice*. You

can't win titles by wrestling nobodies. I've wrestled Ron Bass, Kendo Nagasaki, One Man Gang, The Muslims, Jos LeDuc. My actions answered the critics. I don't have to answer them with words. Talk is cheap, isn't that what they say?"

The critics have lately been quite complimentary. Not only do they



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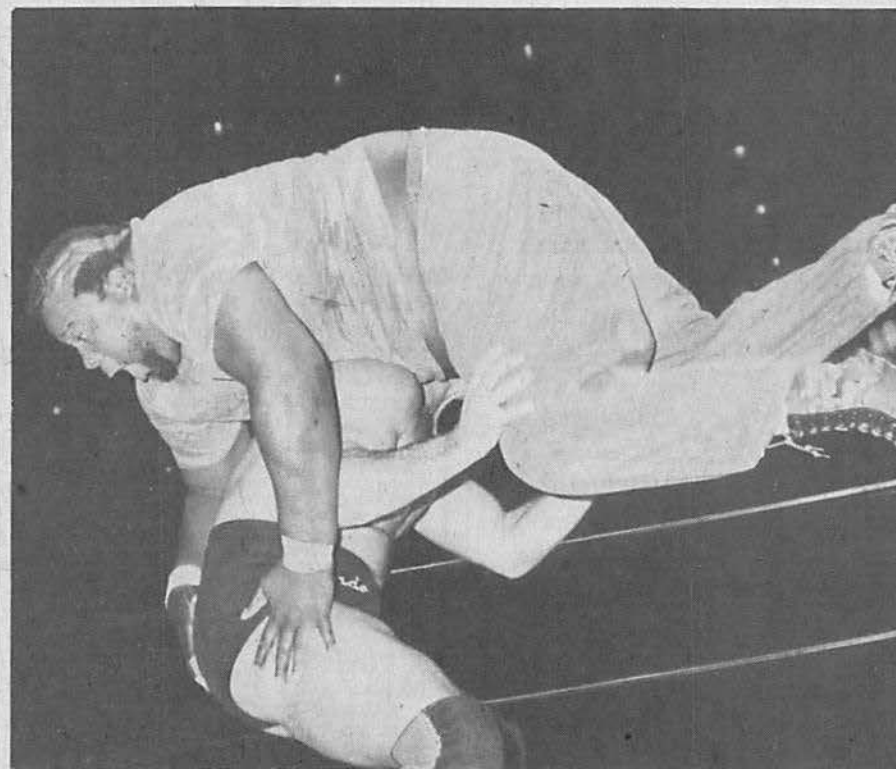
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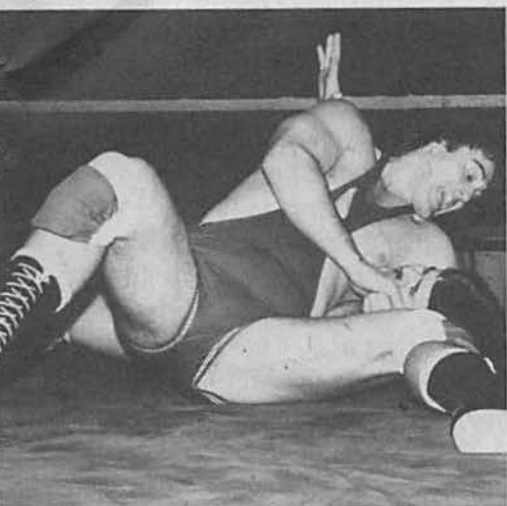
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Rotondo's early experience in Canada (against Louis Laurence, above) proved vital to his current development.

acclaim Rotondo's ring performance, but now they applaud the care he has taken in advancing his career. NWA President Bob Geigel referred to Rotondo as "one of a new breed."

"Rotondo is doing everything he can now to ensure success later," Geigel said. "He just doesn't take any match that comes along, he finds opponents who will help him. He looks for challenges. He looks to learn something in every match. And, of course, when a young wrestler puts forth the kind of intense effort he does, he's going to learn more and learn faster. He couldn't have picked anywhere better to learn than Florida. Not only is there great competition for him there, but there are some great wrestlers to learn from as well."

Rotondo agreed. "I came to Florida because I feel the toughest competition is here. I didn't decide to come here because I thought I could win matches. What's to gain from that? I'm not looking to build my ego, I'm looking to ply my trade as a wrestler against the best opposition I can find. Winning the NWA World championship isn't something you just decide you're gonna do when you wake up in the morning. You have to have talent, you have to train hard, you have to make a commitment to it. It's a lot of work. I love wrestling, but that doesn't make it any easier." □

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RACE-VON ERICH

(Continued from page 37)

"Listen, when you're still a runny-nosed punk like Von Erich, you have to expect to make mistakes like that. I knew he'd be overconfident. I knew he'd try for the grandstand play, try to finish me off with the clawhold."

The Missouri State belt lay on a table next to where Race was combing his hair in the mirror. After winning seven world titles, there can't be much thrill in winning a sixth Missouri championship, but Race was nevertheless very pleased to have possession of the solid gold belt once again.

"So all I did was conserve my energy as best I could," Race continued. "I let him put the claw on me."

Race let Von Erich apply the

"Hell no," he exclaimed. "My strategy is based on the reflex reactions of human nature. Von Erich might be able to get rid of his overconfidence, but it will take years. I made the same mistakes myself long ago. It's exactly how I lost the World title the first couple of times."

"But the experience of years in the ring has taught me well, and I'll never make the same mistake again. No, at this stage of the game I just sit back and capitalize on boys like Von Erich making those mistakes."

As Race packed the Missouri belt into his suitcase and left the arena, David Von Erich was no doubt continuing to contemplate his loss.



Race uses the ropes for leverage as he pins Von Erich to take the title. David feels that he learned an important lesson by this defeat.

claw?

"Hey," he responded, "I'm a lot tougher than I look. I can take a little pain if I have to, and in this case I felt I had to. I let him put the claw on me. Sure, it sounds ridiculous, but don't you think that I could have escaped the claw if I wanted to? I've been the victim of holds over the years that make the claw look like a slap in the face."

"So I took a little pain, shed a little blood, and let David get overconfident. Then I made my move."

Doesn't Race feel as if he's giving away important strategy by revealing his thoughts during his title match with Von Erich?

Contemplation breeds understanding, and judging from Von Erich's comments following the loss, he already understands why he lost the title.

The question remains, however, will he be able to learn from his experience and prevent something like that from happening in the future?

That may not even be under David's control ... it may take years of experience, years of frustration and pain, and dozens of instances of losing titles unnecessarily.

David Von Erich is on his way to professional wrestling immortality—but the hardest part of the journey still lies ahead. ☐

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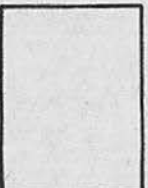
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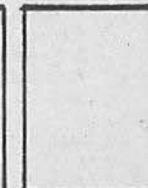
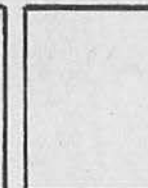
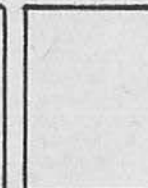
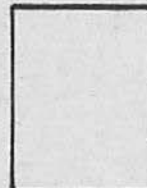
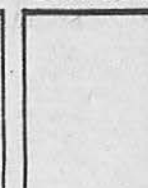
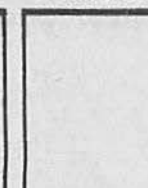
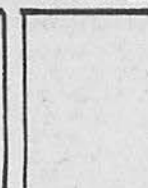
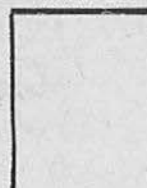
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☐ ANNUAL/Sum 80
☐ ANNUAL/Fall 80
☐ ANNUAL/Sum 81
☐ ANNUAL/Fall 81
☐ ANNUAL/Win 81
☐ ANNUAL/Spr 82
☐ ANNUAL/Sum 82
☐ ANNUAL/Fall 82
☐ ANNUAL/Win 82
☐ ANNUAL/Spr 83
☐ ANNUAL/Sum 83
☐ ANNUAL/Fall 83
☐ ANNUAL/Win 83
☐ ANNUAL/Spr 84

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☐ Superstars/Aug 77
☐ Superstars/Dec 77
☐ Superstars/June 78
☐ Superstars/Win 78
☐ Superstars/Fall 80
☐ Superstars/Fall 81
☐ Superstars/Spr 82
☐ Superstars/Fall 82
☐ Superstars/Win 82
☐ Superstars/Spr 83
☐ Superstars/Sum 83

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MR. WRESTLING II

(Continued from page 43)



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ble-countout conclusion, "but I know I would have felt a lot more comfortable if Terry would have shown up to help me train. I would have been more confident about being in the ring with Bockwinkel, and that always helps your performance. He didn't show up, though, just like he isn't showing up now.

Wrestling II's anger began to build. "Maybe he's with that tag team partner of his again," he continued. "I'd bet on it. I know that's where he was at least once when we were supposed to train. He's probably with him now."

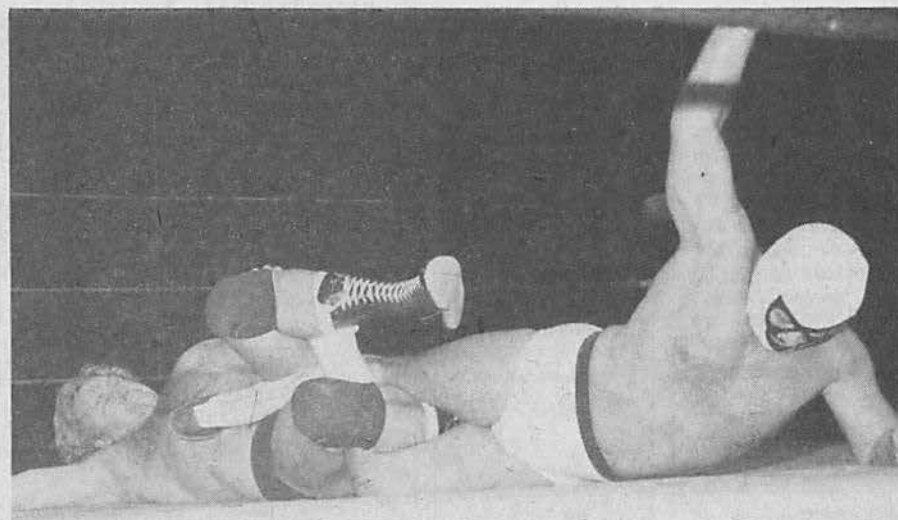
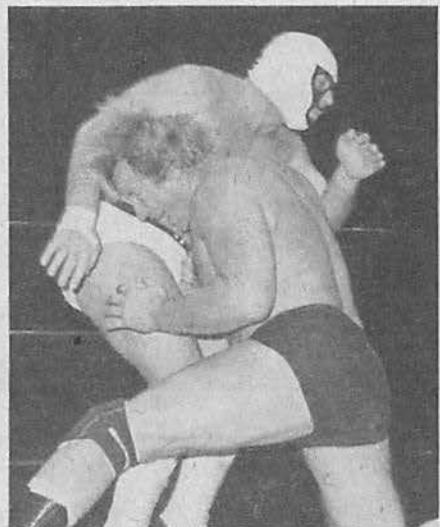
Allen has formed a fine tag team with "Leapin'" Lanny Poffo, a

move of which Wrestling II was adamantly opposed. The masked star made his opinion known to the fans during a televised Mid-South wrestling card when he said:

"Lanny's father was one of the most hated men in professional wrestling, and Lanny's brother, Randy Savage, has followed in his father's footsteps. I think it runs in their family, and I think Lanny could be a dangerous influence on Magnum."

Allen was extremely displeased with Wrestling II's comments, which he refuted on TV: "He's my coach, not my manager. I respect his feelings, but I don't necessarily have to follow every suggestion he makes."

The relationship between Wrestling II and Magnum T.A. became strained after those comments were aired, but at least it still existed. Now it seems as if it might come apart entirely. Wrestling II is blaming Magnum T.A. for his failure to defeat Bockwinkel. "He's told everyone how much he respects me and my knowledge of the sport," Wrestling II said. "I hear it from the other wrestlers. The press writes about it. I don't think he respects me too much as a human being, though. I mean, he didn't even try



Bockwinkel's shoulderdrive leaves Mr. Wrestling II breathless (top). The masked man reaches for the ropes to force the champion to release his figure-four (above).

to come up with a good excuse for why he kept missing our appointments. I don't know what's come over him. Does he have it in for me? Whether or not he was aware of it, he helped Bockwinkel hold on to his title."

The title match was furiously fought from the outset. Much of the match took place outside the ring, as both men flailed away at each other in total disregard for the rulebook.



The match ended in a double-countout with both men battling furiously outside the ring.

"Things would have been different if I had been able to train right," he said. "I had a number of plans to try out in the gym to prepare for Bockwinkel. Since Terry weighs the same and is just about the same height as Bockwinkel, I figured he'd be the perfect sparring partner. Their styles are amazingly similar, although Bockwinkel is more aggressive. But Terry decided he had better things to do. Well, he should know that he probably cost me the AWA title."

As Bockwinkel and Wrestling II pounded each other with closed fists outside the ring, the referee counted both wrestlers out. "I had to fight fire with fire," he said, "because I had no way of testing any strategies before the match. That's the reason for the countout. That's the reason I didn't win the match."

"I think Mr. Magnum T.A. should know that." ☐

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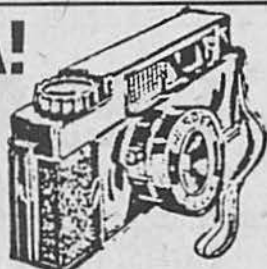
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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from page 6)

Ric is, whether they like him or not.

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MARIE MINCKS

Charles City, IA

VON ERICH RESPECT

I'd like to say that I really enjoyed the story, "The Frustrations Of Kevin Von Erich: 'Is Jim Garvin Really Better Than Me?'" in your February 1984 issue. The story showed how much the Von Erichs respect each other, and how they respect their father's opinions. I really got a good laugh when David was questioning who is really better, Kevin or Garvin—HA! There's no contest! I recently saw Kevin at the Sportatorium and I

can tell you that he has plenty of confidence. Kevin's confidence beamed as he, Kerry, and David successfully defended their World Class six-man tag team championship.

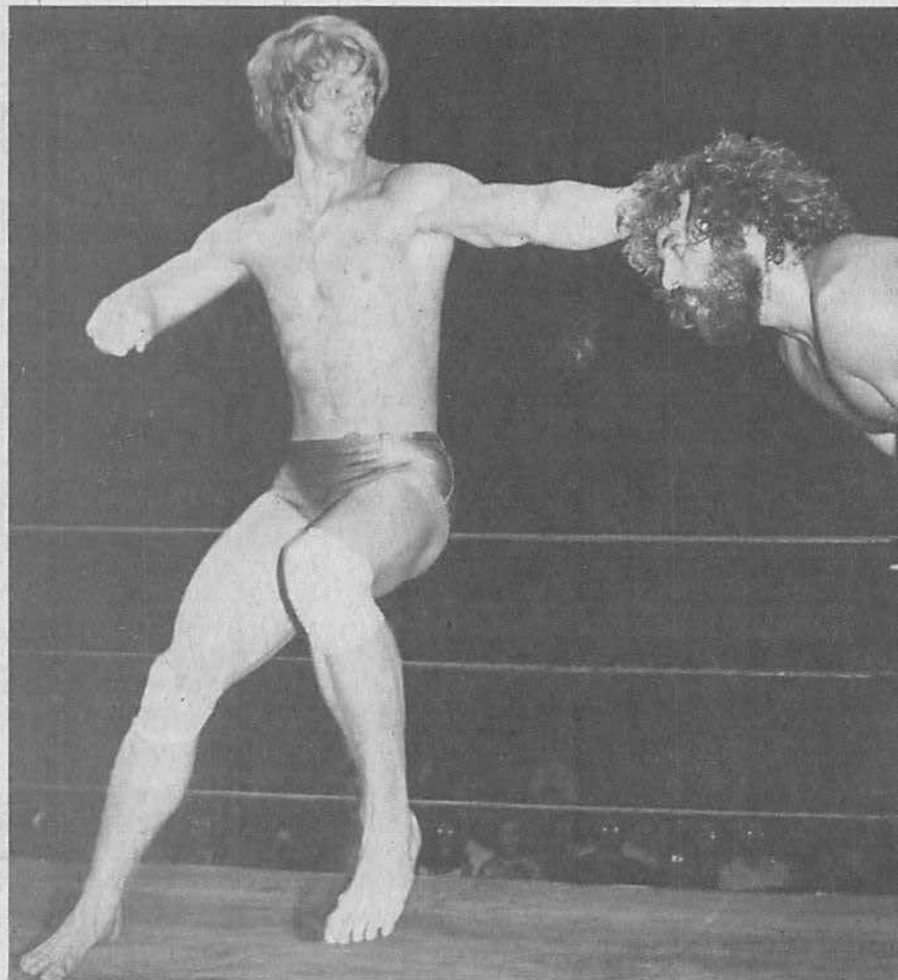
I want to thank the editors of *Inside Wrestling* for covering this story—but frankly, I think it's Garvin you should be worried about.

LAURA KOPCHICK

Plano, TX

STUNNED BY WWF

I am completely stunned by the recent decision of the WWF commissioners. They made Hulk Hogan the number one contender for the WWF title held by The Iron Sheik after it was determined that



Kevin Von Erich sets up Jim Garvin for a right hand to the face. Reader Laura Kopchick appreciated the article in the February issue examining how Kevin overcame his insecurities.



Hulk Hogan is the new WWF champion, and the fans love it. But reader Larry McDougal doesn't feel that the Hulk should have even received a title match.

the injured former champion, Bob Backlund, couldn't wrestle the Sheik in New York's Madison Square Garden.

Are they kidding? Hogan was only wrestling in the WWF area for a week! And all he did in that week was wrestle one tag team match on television with Backlund as his partner! And this makes him number one contender?

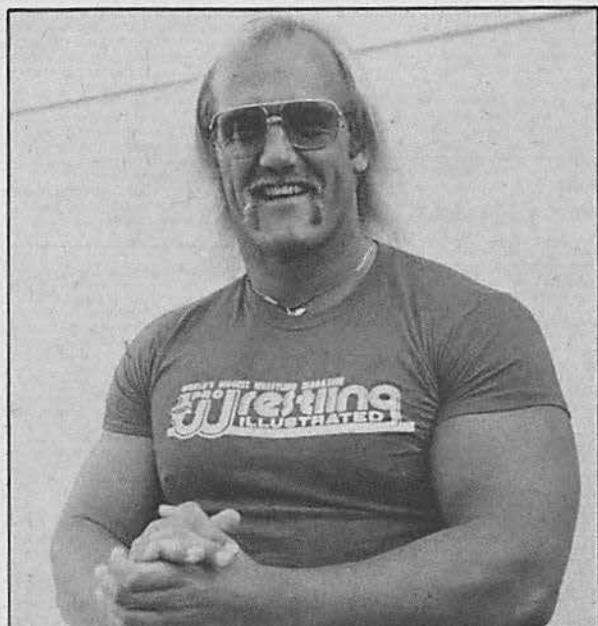
I am completely disgusted by the politics of the WWF commissioners. I wonder how much Hogan had to pay off the promoters in order to get the title shot. I wonder if men who should have had that title shot, men like Jimmy Snuka or Rocky Johnson—men who have been wrestling in the WWF for a lot longer than a week—are as angry at the WWF's decision as I am.

And now Hogan is champion. Big deal. Who cares? He sure doesn't deserve it. That belt should be around Snuka or Johnson's waist.

LARRY McDOUGAL
White Plains, NY ☐

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MEET THE AUTHORS

GAVIN FROST, B.Sc., Ph.D., D.D., is Archbishop of the Church of Wicca, New Bern, North Carolina with national headquarters in Salem, Missouri; branches in several states and worldwide membership. He is Marshal of the Gold Star of England, with the right to wear the Saffron Robe and one of the very few Witches in the Western Hemisphere privileged to wear the authentic mark of initiation on his wrist. Although descended from a long line of mystics and scholars, and formerly a Vice-President and Director of International Operations for major aerospace companies, he prefers to be thought of as a humble teacher.

Mrs. YVONNE FROST, A.A., D.D., with her husband Gavin Frost, devotes her time to giving private instruction and publishing *Survival*, the newsletter of the Church of Wicca, of which she is a Bishop.

Articles by or about Gavin and Yvonne Frost have appeared in such national publications as *Midnight* and the *National Enquirer*.

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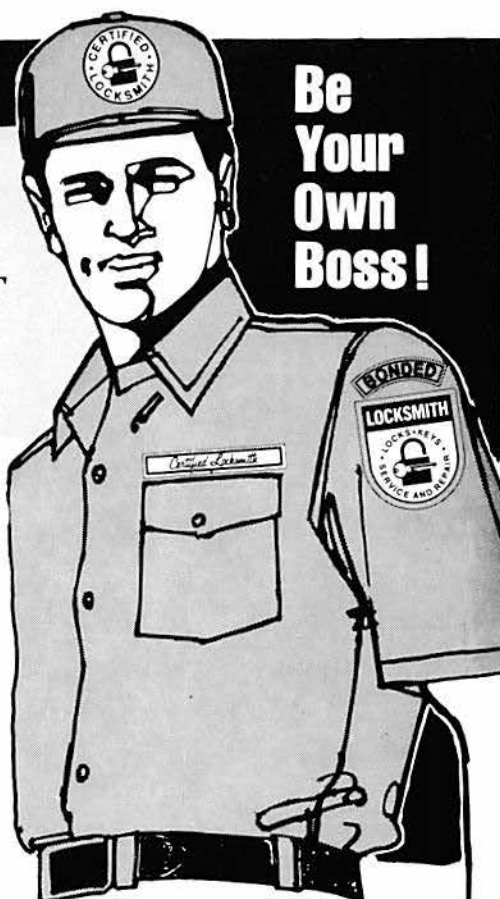
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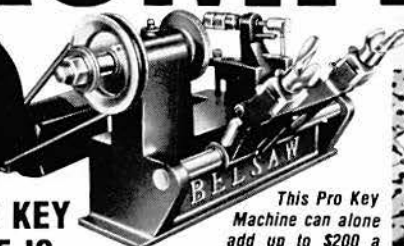
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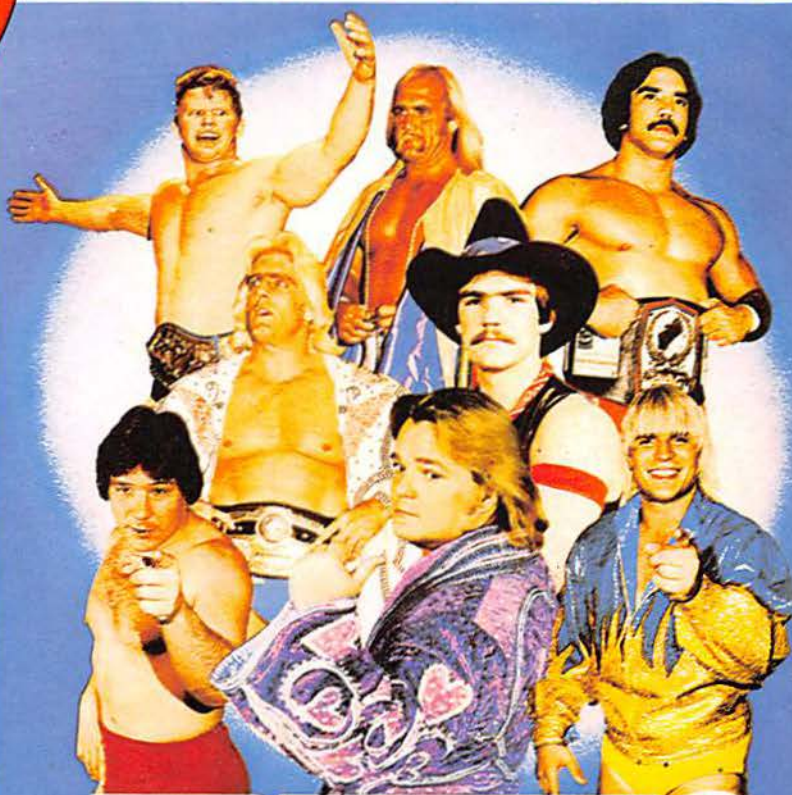
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